

LIBRARY
OF
DIVINITY:
OR,
SELECT EXTRACTS

FROM SUNDRY
OLD AND EMINENT DIVINES
COLLECTED

In a Course of Reading for private Use.

To which are added,

SELECT PIECES OF POETRY.

By R. H.

*In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy
Comforts have delighted my Soul. Ps. xciv. 19.*

L O N D O N
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INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages consist of Extracts from sundry old and valuable Authors, taken by the person that now occasions their publication, in his private reading, who penned them down at sundry times for his own use, and with no other design: but having been recommended by a Christian friend to print them, and as he trusts he received benefit from them himself, he is desirous others might, under a divine blessing, do so likewise, and in hopes thereof he has complied.

It may be said, what need of such extracts when the books themselves are many of them to be had? In answer: the several authors quoted may never come into the hands of many, or
others

vi INTRODUCTION.

others may not have the opportunity to read them so as to pick out the pithy and striking sentences therein contained : therefore, to view in so small a compass the excellent sentiments, sound divinity, and sweet experience of so many great writers now in glory, the collector hopes, cannot be unacceptable to pious souls ; and especially as we live in a day of so great declension, when the love of many, and even professors of religion, wax cold, their hearts dull and backward to divine and spiritual things, a too great cleaving to the things of time, and they find a need of the use of all means to revive the soul and raise it upwards.

The Reader is desired to excuse the order that might have been observed in selecting particular subjects, and ranging them by themselves, and every other imperfection, as the person who made
this

INTRODUCTION.

this collection, does not propose himself as an author, nor did he design putting his name hereto; but as an anonymous book does not make so good appearance, even when the author proposes not the least advantage of profit to himself, which is the case of this publication, and therefore hopes subscribing his name will not be thought ostentatious.

If this book is blessed to any poor soul for refreshment, establishment, and consolation, and is a means to draw the heart more out to God and his Dear Son, the collector of these extracts will have his sincere wish, who begs an interest in the prayers of the pious Reader, and is their humble servant,

RICHARD HALL.

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A
LIBRARY
OF
DIVINITY.

On the scene with God & the Mercies.
From Mr. JOHN FLAVEL.

BEWARE you loose not your God in the crowd and hurry of earthly business; and touch not with that, which you cannot recommend to God by prayer for a blessing. It is hard to forget, what is our sin to remember. What tongue of man or angel can give us the compleat emphasis of that word, "Ever with the Lord;" or that of God's being "all in all." O! with how many notwithstanding, and nevertheless, hath the Lord
B done

done you good in every place. Every man loves the mercies of God, but a Saint loves the God of his mercies. Two things destroy the peace and tranquillity of our lives, our bewailing past disappointments, or fearing future ones. Lord, let me but find my heart complying with thy calls, my will obediently submitting to thy commands, sin my burden, and Christ my desire, I never crave a fairer, or surer evidence of love to my soul. This comforted Job over all his diseases, when of all the enjoyments that once he had, he could not say, my friends, my children, my estate; yet then he could say, my Redeemer.

From Mr. MASON'S Remains.

IT is not talking, but walking with God, that gives a man the denomination of a christian. A desire of happiness is natural; a desire of holiness is supernatural. The gate which leads to life is a strait gate, therefore we should fear; it is an open gate, therefore we should hope. Religion is much talked of, but little understood, till the conscience be awakened, then a man knows the worth of a soul, and the want of a Saviour. Then doth religion flourish in
the

the soul, when it knows how to naturalize spiritual things, and to spiritualize natural things. God deals with his servants not as a passionate master, but as a compassionate Father. They that will not fear God in prosperity, will be afraid of him in adversity. If God's earthly presence is so good, what is his heavenly presence? If God's being with us is so sweet, what is it to be with God? There is joy in God's gracious presence, but in his glorious presence there is fulness of joy. The nearer we are to Christ, the nearer is God to us. We hated God without a cause, and his love is without a cause. If we would stand Christ must be our foundation; if we would be safe, Christ must be our sanctuary. The love of Christ hath a height without a top, a depth without a bottom, a length without an end, and a breadth without a limit. A child of God had rather ten thousand times suffer for Christ, than that Christ should suffer by him. The conversion of a sinner is a greater wonder than the creation of the world. If a sinner's thoughts be not changed by grace, they will be exchanged hereafter by experience.

We must neither leave the world, nor love it. The world promises comforts, and pays
B 2 sorrows.

sorrows. We must answer for our riches, but our riches cannot answer for us. If there be too great an affection for any thing here, there will be an answerable affliction. It is a sad thing, when a man can have no comfort, but in diversions, no joy, but in forgetting himself. To have a portion in the world, is a mercy; to have the world for a portion is a misery. Whatever we make an idol of, will be a cross to us, if we belong to Christ; a curse to us, if we do not. There is no mis of the creature, where there is a full enjoyment of the Creator.

Of the Word of God.

THE word of God must be nearer to us, than our friends; dearer to us, than our liberty; and pleasanter to us, than all earthly comforts. It is a comfort to christians apart to think their prayers meet before a throne of grace, and their persons shall meet before a throne of glory. God is a great God, and therefore he will be sought; he is a good God, and therefore he will be found. Pray, that you may pray! let nothing get between heaven and prayer, but Christ. Man does not die, because he is made of earth; but, because he is infected with sin. Death to a christian is a putting off
rags

rags for robes. The great comfort of a believer on his death-bed is, faith in Christ, hope in the promise, and an interest in the covenant.

Of Heaven.

IF heaven does not enter into us by way of holiness, we shall never enter into heaven by way of happiness. In heaven, God will never hide his face more, nor the devil shew his more. In heaven all God's servants will be abundantly satisfied with his dealings and dispensations with them, and shall see how all conduced like so many winds to bring them to their haven, and how, even the roughest blasts helped to bring them homeward. If thou lovest to worship God here below, God will take thee up to worship him above; thou shalt change thy place, but not thine employment. Heaven is a day without a cloud to darken it, and without a night to end it. We would be seated in the heavenly Canaan, but are loth to be scratched with the briars and thorns of the wilderness.

Of Hell.

NONE are so near heaven, as they that are convinced; none so near hell as those who have quenched conviction. We must fall

into the arms of Christ, or into the flames of hell. A creature's place is a low place, but a sinner's place is a lower.

Religious Observations by Way of Simile.

THE casting down of our spirits in true humility, is but like throwing a ball on the ground, which makes it rebound the higher towards heaven. Sin is like a bee with honey in its mouth, but a sting in its tail. As Noah's dove found no footing but in the ark, so a christian finds no contentment but in Christ. God's mercies are as cords to draw us to him, but our sins are as sharp swords, that cuts those cords. A wicked man is like one that hangs over a deep pit by a slender cord with one hand, and is cutting it with the other. Creature-comforts at the best, and to the best, are only delightful, not satisfying; pleasant not gainful. 1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin; bless God for that word All. They that are the least serious, have the greatest reason to be so, their condition is awful, and therefore their disposition ought to be so. We should be ashamed of sin, but not ashamed to take shame for sin. One that truly

truly fears God, is afraid of sin; he sees more evil in it, than in all the evils in the world. Want of sorrow for sin, more argues want of love to Christ, than the sin itself. If a man is not content in that state he is in, he will not be content in any state he would be in. God had rather his people should fare poorly, than live proudly. Pride counts the gospel foolishness, but the gospel always shews pride to be so. It is unreasonable for the creature to be proud, much more the sinner. An hypocrite is one that neither is what he seems, nor seems what he is.

Of Idleness.

IDLENESS is the mother of wanton children. They that do nothing, are in the ready way to do that, which is worse than nothing. A christian should never say, he hath nothing to do. It was not for nothing that we were called out of nothing. The soft mercies of God, will break the hard heart of man. An hard heart is not so soon broken, as a broken heart bound up. A word from God, a look from Christ, a touch from the Spirit, will break the heart. Possibly a christian's enemies may spoil him of his common mercies, but they shall

never rob him of his covenant mercies. Common mercies may be sweet, but covenant mercies are sure. There is grace in the desire of grace, as there is sin in the desire of sin. God repented that he made man, but never repented that he redeemed man. God is a great God, and therefore we should wait upon him; he is a good God, and therefore it is not in vain to wait upon him. All creatures are as nothing compared with God, and absolutely nothing without God. Live not so much upon the comforts of God, as upon the God of comforts. Remember if it be good to draw near to God, it is better to draw nearer to him, still the nearer the better. One may see an end of earthly perfection, but there is no end of the perfection of Jesus Christ,

A Boast.

A Christ I have, O! what a Christ have I?
My only all — my more than heart's desire.
Now I am free to live — more free to die,
That I may see the face I so admire.
The face and bowels of this earth afford
Jewels for mortals pride which makes them high.
This is my scorn — this is not like my Lord.
A Christ I have — O what a Christ have I!

From

From Mr. JOHN ROWE's Saint's Temptations. 1675.

THE best way to overcome our temptations is, to have our minds elevated and lift up to God. This is a true proposition, he that believeth shall be saved; all the devils in hell cannot overthrow that truth. In every temptation let us be sure to keep the word of God nigh unto us; and have a present recourse to it; this is a sure rule. Sanctified knowledge humbles, the more we know of God, the more we know our distance from God; and the more we know the will of God, the more we see how short we come of the spirituality of the law; and this is a means to humble us. Of all corruptions, fight against these two, Pride and Self. God alone is the rest of our souls; so far as our hearts are carried out with life and vigour towards God, we shall find rest, and peace, and quiet to our soul; so far as we depart from him, we shall find nothing but trouble and disquietment; therefore let us pray with the church, "Draw me, we will run after thee." It was the speech of an eminently holy man, "There was not the best action that ever I
" did

“ did in my life, but God shewed me some sinful circumstance attending it.” This is a certain truth, nothing so much humbles the soul, as clear sights of God. But now there are some acts which are above the sphere of nature, as to believe God upon his word, to love God above all things, and refer a man’s self and all his actions to the glory of God as his last end. There is nothing in the world we can be certain of; the greatest, highest, and best things are subject to change; but if we know that our sins are pardoned, if we know that we have an interest in the love and favour of God, if we know that our souls shall be saved at last, here we have something that is certain to quiet and comfort us. Divine grace discovers to the soul the reality of spiritual things; it causeth a man to apprehend what is spoken concerning God to be real; it causeth a man to apprehend that heaven, and the glory of it, is a real thing, and that the excellency of Christ is a real thing. Grace makes a man to receive the word as the word of God; it discovers to him the nature of the word, that it comes from God, and hath a divine stamp and impress upon it. Nothing is more sweet to an holy soul than to love God, and be beloved
of

of him. Do we not find it a difficult thing to come to the spiritual apprehensions of Christ? how hard do we find it to apprehend the person of Christ aright? how difficult is it to have right conceptions of the righteousness of Christ, and of the grace of Christ? Our hearts are oftentimes out of frame, very much unsuited to spiritual things, and holy souls are sensible of the need of divine grace to bring them into frame. Presumption of our own strength and sufficiency is that which undoes us. The work of a christian lies mainly and principally in two things; in the study of Christ, and in the study of his own heart: the study of our own hearts will make us see the need we have of Christ and his grace. Observe it in yourselves, and you will find it true; when you neglect to have recourse to Christ, and have not that intimate dependance upon him for grace, you shall find, that your souls are not so lively and vigorous in the ways of God, as when your dependance upon him is kept up high and strong. We must all venture our salvation upon the bottom of God's word. Those that have once tasted of the sweetness and goodness of the word, cannot but still desire it as long as that taste remains with them. Consider, O christian! what glory doth

doth there appear in the word at sometimes, what excellency and heavenly sweetness in the promises at one time, over and above what there doth at another. If we neglect any one of the means of grace, we shall soon find dullness and deadness come upon us; for this is certain, the infinite wise God hath appointed no one means of grace in vain; and so naturally dull and dead are our hearts, that there is not one of the means of grace but we need it. Happy soul is he, that hath the skill of a constant dependance upon Christ. Holy souls pant after God's gracious presence here on earth, and they thirst after God's glorious presence in heaven. When we find our hearts dead, unapt to move towards God, then should we pray for the drawings of divine grace. God alone is the rest of our souls, so far as we depart from him we shall find nothing but trouble and disquietment. If we maintain our dependance upon Christ, we shall never want supplies of grace. We are apt to think with ourselves; is it possible that ever I should feel such sinful thoughts and motions, as I feel? Wo to us, when temptation comes, if we be left either to satan's malice or subtilty, or in the hands of our own hearts.

From

From Mr. THOMAS SYMSON's Protestant
Picture of JESUS CHRIST.

THOMAS SYMSON, at Tottenham High-Cross, Middlesex, wishing real grace, whilst they are in a state of mortality, and royal glory, when they shall be in a state of eternity.

Their present Pastor doth cordially wish,
The best of Blessings, from the best of Beings,
Wishing unto them all

An undoubted interest in him,
A transcendent affection towards him,
A punctual conformity to him on earth,
And an eternal enjoyment of him in heav'n.

The soul of every saint is a very curious watch; its several faculties are the silver wheels; the loveliness of Jesus is the golden spring from whence those silver wheels have an exact, regular, present, and perpetual motion. What Xenophon said, long since of Cyrus's court, that a man might choose blind-fold, and not miss of a good man there, that may now, and ever, be said of the sacred scriptures; a man at any time, may wink and choose, and not miss of a good text there. In them there is not so much as one word without its weight, nor so much

much as one syllable without its substance. The works of God do very well deserve the eye of a man, (the eye of his observation, and the eye of his admiration.) Our blessed Saviour was a man of sorrows, and was acquainted with grief. My soul, saith he, is exceeding sorrowful, unto death ! How emphatical is this expression : My soul, saith he, is sorrowful ! Soul-sorrow, is without all question, the soul of sorrow. He was manifested, (saith St. John,) to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.

His soul it was,—What was it ? It was — A holy lamb without a spot ; A pleasant garden without weeds ; A fragrant rose without prickles ; A golden mine without dross ; An orient diamond without a flaw ; A bright sun without clouds, or eclipses ; A perfect beauty without a shadow ; A golden apple without a core ; A pure cloth without a stain ; A well-printed book without erratas.

The sabbath-day, is the day of days, it is the golden spot of the week, it is the soul's market-day ; and indeed, (as one says well,) they that would have comfort in the day of the Lord, must make conscience of the Lord's-day.

Return we therefore to his fulness of abundance : His soul it was—What was it ? It was—

A costly

A costly cabinet, filled with bright and sparkling jewels; A curious honey-comb, filled with palate-pleasing honey; A well-fenced garden, abounding with most wholesome herbs, and fragrant flowers; A glorious sun, full of dazzling and delightful light; An inestimable and incomparable treasury, full of refined gold; An invaluable vessel of transparent crystal, filled with liquid gold; An alabaster box of precious and perfumed ointment; A boundless, and a bottomless ocean, swelling with liquid pearls, or dissolved diamonds; A large, and a well-seasoned cask, filled with celestial Nectar. As for the beauty and the brightness of the creature, what shall I say? It is a flitting shadow, a sliding stream, a consuming taper, a setting sun, a waning moon, withering grass, and a fading flower; it is scarcely possessed, ere it be certainly vanished.

The soul of a saint is no longer in health than whilst it smells to the rose of Sharon. The soul of a saint lives constantly in Christ, nor can it even live (much less live ever) comfortably without Christ. The happiness of a saint doth consist in his smiles, and the comfort of a saint in the apparition or apprehension of those smiles. A saint's desire to be in heaven,

is not for heaven's sake, but for Christ's sake : whom have I in heaven, (saith the Psalmist,) but Thee; " Having a desire, (saith the Apostle,) to depart, and to be with Christ." The beauty of Jesus, is the devil's envy ; it is also the sinner's scorn, but it should be the saint's glory. Christ is the husband of his saints, a good husband he is ; good without all question, good beyond all comparison. Heart's-ease is a flower that grows not in the world's garden. What will not a hungry and thirsty soul part withal for a part in Christ, who is all in all. A saint, having once obtained his Jesus, doth constantly acquiesce in the enjoyment of his sweetness. So exceedingly satisfied is the soul of a saint, and so fully is it delighted and contented in the enjoyment of Jesus, as that it can say with St. Augustine, Let all things, (saith he,) I beseech thee, wither, yea wax dry to me, that thou, sweet Jesus, and thou only, mayest become sweet unto me. The soul of a saint having once a part in Christ, cannot endure to part with Christ, or to depart from Christ. Sweet was that saying of St. Augustine: O Lord, (saith he,) if thou wilt that I shall depart from thee, thou must give me another Thee, or else I will not depart. When once the saints and
their

their Saviour are mutually betrothed, it is to have and to hold each other, as long as they live on earth, and as long as He lives in heaven. It is an impossible thing for a man, (for any man,) to keep his soul, if he lose his Saviour. It was an incomparable answer which one returned, when he was tempted with gifts to forsake his Saviour: "Do but offer me, (saith he,) somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you." Jesus Christ, (the chiefest beauty,) is nothing at all unto us, unless he be in an especial manner apprehended and applyed by us. St. Augustine says, take away My from God, and you may take away even God himself from me. (As a father saith,) We should have life in patience, and death in desire. If ever you would be lovely, like Christ, you must be holy like Christ; holiness is a christian's comeliness. If we cannot relish the wholesome morsels of holiness, as the first dish at God's table, we shall never have the sweet-meats of happiness served up unto us, for an after-banquet. That man, or woman, whose soul is fully set upon the Lord Jesus Christ, will undoubtedly do (or at least endeavour to do) these two things; first, He will seek for Jesus

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Christ

Christ with diligence; secondly, He will set forth Jesus Christ with eloquence. If we say, that we have no sin, (no original sin,) we deceive ourselves, (saith the Apostle,) and the truth is not in us; if we say, that we have not sinned, (actually sinned,) we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. There is no disease (I see,) incurable, (how desperate, how durable soever it be,) unto that Physician, who is omnipotent. Jesus Christ, is the beauty of the world; Jesus Christ, is the beauty of the soul; he is also the beauty of heaven; his shining beauty it is that makes heaven to be heaven. So exceeding great is the happiness of heaven, and of saints in heaven, that glorified saints, (were they capable of sorrow,) would be exceedingly grieved at two things; first, that they did not prize Christ better on earth; and secondly, that they were not with Christ sooner in heaven. The sweat of the brain, doth exceed by far the sweat of the brow. Jesus Christ is the chiefest beauty, we cannot possibly be excessive, either in our expressions, or in our conceptions, concerning either Christ or heaven.

From

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them to crucify him, nor infused that malice into them, nor quickened it; but he seeing such a frame, withdrew his restraining grace, and left them to the conduct of their own vitiated wills. All the corruption in the world ariseth from lust in us, not from the object which God in his providence presents to us, 2 Pet. i. 4. The creature is from God, but the abuse of it from corruption. Man hath such a nature, not from creation wherein God is positive, but from corruption, wherein God is permissive. In short, though it be by God's permission that we can do evil, yet it is not by his inspiration that we will to do evil, that is wholly from ourselves. God is not obliged to give us grace, because we have made a total forfeiture of it; he is not a debtor to any man by way of merit of any thing, but punishment. He is indeed in some sense a debtor to those that are in Christ, upon the account of Christ's purchase, and his own promise, but not by any merit of theirs. The holiness of God could never intend sin as sin, but the wisdom of God foreseeing it, and decreeing to permit it, intended the making it subservient to his honour. He would not permit it but for some good, because he is infinitely good, and could not, but by reason of that goodness, suffer that which is purely
purely

purely evil, if by his wisdom he could not raise good out of it: it is purely evil as it is contrary to law; it is good as God orders it by his providence; yet that goodness flows not from the nature of sin, but from the wise disposal of God: It is not conceivable by us, what way there could be more congruous to the wisdom and holiness of God, as the state of the world then stood, to bring about the death of Christ, which in his decree was necessary to the satisfaction of his justice, without ordering the evil of some mens hearts to serve his gracious purpose. The first foundation of all religion is, first, the being; secondly, the goodness of God in the government of the world, Heb. xi. 6. He is the object of religion, as he is the governor of the world. This denial would shut up Bibles and Temples, and bring irreligious disorder into all societies. The devil denies not God's right to govern, but he denies God's actual government; for he saith, Luke iv. 6. He that denies providence, denies most of God's attributes: he denies at least the exercise of them, he denies his omniscience, which is the eye of providence; mercy and justice, which are the arms of it; power, which is the life and motion of providence; wisdom, which is the rudder of pro-

vidence, whereby it is steered; and holiness, which is the compass and rule of the motion of providence. It is a greater crime in any of us to deny providence, either in opinion, or practice, than it was, or could have been in heathens, because we have not only that natural reason they had, sufficient to convince us, but supernatural revelation in scripture, wherein God hath declared those methods of his providence, which reason could not arrive to. As to deny the creation of the world, is a greater crime in a man that knows the scripture, than in a heathen, because that hath put it out of doubt. Take heed therefore of entertaining any conceptions of God, but what the scripture doth furnish you with. The fears of conscience evidence a secret belief in men of a just providence, whatever means they use to stifle it. Wisdom without providence would make any man mad, and the greatest advantage would be to be a stupid senseless fool. While we trust ourselves, we do but trouble ourselves, and know not how to reconcile our various reasons for hopes and fears; but the committing our way to the Lord, renders our mind calm and composed, Prov. xvi. 3. thou shalt have no more of those quarrelling disturbing thoughts,
what

what the success shall be. If angels, as Calvin saith, are God's counsellors in heaven, believers are, (as it were,) his counsellors on earth. The church hath that relation to God, which none in the world have besides; they are his jewels, therefore he will keep them; they are his children, therefore he will spare them. The church is Christ's flesh, as dear to him as our flesh is to us, as much his, as our flesh is ours. God hath nothing to do in the world, but the saving his people; when that is done, he will put an end to this frame of things. God times his kindness, so that it may appear to be nothing else but grace; grace with a witness, that his people may be able to understand the very particularities of it, Isa. xxx. 18. Never is salvation sweeter, and mercy better relished, than when it snatches us out of the teeth of danger. God would have his mercy valued, and it is fit it should. Without faith, we are not fit to desire mercy; without humility, we are not fit to receive it; without affection, we are not fit to value it; without sincerity, we are not fit to improve it. God with us, if well considered and believed, is sufficient to still those fears which have the greatest outward objects for their encouragement, Psalm. xxvii. 1. Man

cannot understand his own way, much less the ways of an infinite God; his ways are beyond our tracing, and his councils too high for our short measures. Since therefore God satisfies the righteousness of his own will, let us submit our curiosity to his wisdom, and forbear our censures of that exact righteousness and superlative wisdom, which we cannot comprehend. How apt are we to forget old mercies, when we are so naturally apt to blot out of our memories mercies newly received. Men do not argue from one single proposition, but draw the conclusion from several propositions knit together. It is by a spiritual logic we are to make our conclusions from the ways of providence. As in the reading scripture, if we take not the whole period, we may make not only nonsense, but blasphemy; as in that of the Psalmist, "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in unrighteousness." If a man should read only, "Thou art not a God," and make a full stop there, it would be blasphemy; but reading the whole verse, it is excellent sense, and an honourable declaration of God's holiness. Such errors will be committed in reading the books of providence; if we fix our eyes in one place, and make a full stop, where

where God hath not made any. We have no reason to despond in great extremities, since he can think us into safety, Psalm. xl. 17. "Lord think on me," much more look us into it; his thoughts and his eyes move together.

From Mr. JOHN CALVIN's Institution of the Christian Religion. 1582.

FOR what, when satan transformeth himself into an angel of light, what credit shall the Holy Ghost have among us, if it be not severally known by some assured marks. For with a certain mutual knot, the Lord hath coupled together the assurance of his word and of his Spirit; so that perfect reverence to the word doth then settle in our minds, when the Holy Ghost shineth upon us, to make us therein behold the face of God. And on the other side, without all fear of being deceived we do embrace the Holy Ghost, when we re-acknowledge him in his own image, that is in his word. Thus it is undoubtedly: at this present let one Psalm suffice us, Psalm. cxlv. 3. wherein the sum of all his virtues are so exactly reckoned up, that nothing can seem to be omitted; and yet is nothing there rehearsed, but that which we may behold

behold in his creatures : so plainly do we perceive God by information of experience, to be such as he declareth himself to be in his word. Such is our weakness, that unless the scripture direct us in seeking of God, we do forthwith run out into vanity. Now how necessary, and how many ways profitable this exercise of prayer is, can by no words be sufficiently declared; hereby groweth singular rest and quietness to our consciences : for when we have disclosed to the Lord the necessity which distressed us, we largely rest, though it were but in this only, that none of our evils are hidden from him, whom we are persuaded both to be most well-willing towards us, and most able to provide well for us. For how can any thought of God enter into thy mind, but that thou must therewithal by and by think, that forasmuch as thou art his creature, therefore thou art of right subject and bound to his authority; that thou owest him thy life, that whatsoever thou enterprisest, whatsoever thou dost, ought to be directed to him. Again, thou canst not clearly see him, but that thou must needs know, that he is the fountain and original of all good things, whereupon should grow both a desire to cleave unto him, and an assured trust in him,

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if man's own corruptness did not draw his mind from the right searching of him. For, first of all, the godly mind doth not as by a dream image to herself any God at adventure, but steadfastly beholdeth the only one and true God; and doth not falsely forge of him whatsoever herself liketh, but is content to believe him to be such a one as he discloseth himself; and doth always with great diligence beware that with presumptuous rashness she pass not beyond his will, and so wander out of the way. If we earnestly covet to the true beholding of God, we must, I say, come to his word, wherein God is well and lively set out by his works, when his works be weighed, not after the perverseness of our own judgment, but according to the rule of the eternal truth. If we swerve from that word, as I said even now, although we run never so fast, yet we shall never attain to the mark, because the course of our running is out of the way. Let us therefore remember, so oft as any man considereth his own nature, that there is one God which so governeth all natures, that his will is to have us to look unto him, our faith to be directed to him, and him to be worshipped and called upon of us. But now, if any man inquire the cause, whereby he both was once
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led to create all these things, and is now moved to preserve them; we shall find that his only goodness was it that caused him. Yet hereby appeareth, that if men be only taught by nature, they can know nothing certainly, soundly, and plainly concerning God, but only are tied to confused principles, to worship an unknown God. For the scripture sheweth in itself no less apparent sense of the truth, than white and black things do of their colour, or sweet and sour things of taste. Thus then we ought to hold, that to the end true religion may shine among us, we must take our beginning at the heavenly doctrine; and that no man can have any taste, be it never so little, of true and sound doctrine, unless he have been scholar to the scripture; and from hence groweth the original of true understanding, that we reverently embrace whatsoever it pleaseth God therein to testify of himself. Let us, as in the whole doctrine of religion, so here also remember, that we ought to keep one rule of modesty and sobriety, that of obscure things we neither speak nor think, not yet desire to know any other things than that hath been taught us by the word of God: and another point, that in reading of scripture we continually rest upon the searching and studying of
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of such things as pertain to edification, and not give ourselves to curiosity or study of things unprofitable. And because it was God's pleasure to instruct us not in trifling questions, but in sound godliness, fear of his name, true confidence, and duties of holiness, let us rest upon such knowledge. We must walk, we must profit, we must increase, that our hearts may be able to conceive those things which now we cannot conceive. If this thought be of force with us, that the word of the Lord is the only way that may lead us to search whatsoever is lawful to be learned of him, that it is the only light to see whatsoever we ought to see of him, it shall easily hold back and restrain us from all rashness. Let them remember, that the minds of men do enter into a maze when they follow their own curiosity, and so let them suffer themselves to be ruled with the heavenly oracles, howsoever they cannot attain the height of the mystery, that Christ is the bread of life, wherewith the faithful are nourished into eternal salvation; there is no man but he granteth him to, unless he be altogether without religion.

From

From Mr. THOMAS POWELL, A Salve
for Soul-sores. 1679.

ONE old piece of gold is worth a thousand new counters ; so one old truth of God is more worth than a thousand new errors. It is not the knowing of truth, nor the hearing of truth, nor the commending of truth, nor the talking of truth, but the indwelling of truth in your soul, that will keep your judgment chaste and sound. The mercies of God in number, are as the glittering stars in the firmament, the drops of the briny ocean, and the sands upon the winding shores ; the dusts of the earth, and the atoms that swim in the sun-beams, are not so numerous as them. A sympathizing friend, (as one says,) is like a dry house in a wet day. A weak believer, and a strong Christ, can do all things, (Bolton). The scriptures are a prospective glass of God's justice, as well as of his mercy. Riches are but the golden dust of this world, that puts out the eye of the soul. Saith Austin, the world is troubled and troublesome, yet too much loved. The devil many times makes the soul believe that he flies, when it is only a pretence, and with a design to overcome. Pray, take notice of this, satan is not always
overcome

overcome when he flies from you. (Alsted,) When one temptation is overcome, expect another. All the whole volume of perfections, which are spread through heaven and earth, are epitomized in Christ. If God is angry, he will not always be angry, may the believer say. Cruciger, on his death-bed prayed thus: Lord, I call upon thee with a weak and languishing faith, but yet with a faith. Death is like the pillar of cloud, it hath a dark side to a sinner, but it hath a light side to a believer. Death will free us from all corporal and spiritual maladies, it is our best and last physician, it will cure the aching head, and the unbelieving heart. Here sin will keep house, whether we will or no. Evil thoughts are continually arising out of our hearts, as sparks out of a furnace; when we would pray, the heart is as a viol out of tune; when we would like a bird fly up to heaven upon the wing of meditation, our corruptions like a string tied to the leg, pulls us down again. Prayer is the key that opens God's store-house, and fetches out from thence those mercies that our various wants and necessities call for. All things shall work together for good to them that love God: this is a Jacob's staff in the hand of faith, with which we may walk chearfully

cheerfully to the mount of God: what will satisfy or give content if this will not? (Watson). Take God from the soul, and it will be incapable of wrestling with such a mighty spirit as the devil is. Being conscious of our own imbecillity, we should twist by faith about Christ, and in him we are more than conquerors. God is above the devil, should be every tempted soul's motto. Were it not for a tempting devil, and a deceitful heart, what brave lives might we live. It is easier to reject, than debate the devil's arguments. He is sooner conquered by prayer, than by disputes. Revealed things are enough for our faith and life, leave the secret unto God alone. There is no sword but the two-edged sword of the Spirit, that will be found to be metal of proof, when a soul comes to fight with the devil. The word of God, read, heard, and meditated, is a sovereign remedy against the devil's temptations. The word, that sword well handled in its preceptive, promissive, and threatening part, will send the devil packing. Learn of Christ, (saith Luther,) to have our Bible at command, and satan will not dare to stay; for all the devils in hell cannot stand before the breath of the Lord's nostrils. Believers, when they are tempted, should plead

as Christ their Saviour; Scriptum est, it is written! Give thyself to prayer; prayer is a sacrifice to God, a scourge to the devil, and a shelter to the soul. What the key is to the watch, that prayer is to religion; it winds it up and sets it going. Prayer is the guard to secure the fort-royal of the heart: prayer is the porter to keep the door of the lips, and prayer is the strong hilt which defends the hands. Prayer is the midwife, to bring all those mercies into the world to the believer, which are conceived in the womb of the promises. Satan's power is narrower than his will and malice; otherwise he had not left a church on earth: he hath nothing to do with the upper world. Heaven fears no devil; and therefore its gates stand always open: he cannot come to the rolls to blot out thy name out of the book of life. Maximilian, the emperor, was so delighted with that sentence of Paul, "If God be with us, who shall be against us?" that he caused it to be written upon the walls in most rooms of his palace. You are provided with armour of proof, (armour of God's making as well as God's appointing) and there is none like it; you have the same sword that Jesus Christ and your brethren have conquered the devil by. God has

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thoughts

thoughts of love in all that he doth to his people; the grounds of his dealing is love, and the ends of his dealing is love. The faint's troubles are not penal, but medicinal. Worldly felicity is but a painted felicity. Sometimes the temptation is levelled at the head. Satan will be disputing against this truth, and that, to make the christian, if he can, call them into question, merely because his understanding cannot understand them; and he prevails with some upon this very account to blot the deity of Christ, with other mysterious truths of the gospel, quite out of their creed: now faith interposeth between the christian and this arrow. The doctrine of the Trinity, of the creation of the world, of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, of the resurrection of the body, are quarrelled with by human reason. I have read of one that being sensible of his own deadness and dulness in prayer, would chide himself thus; what, dost thou think Jonas prayed thus, when he was in the belly of hell, or Daniel, when he was in the lion's den, or the thief, when he was upon the cross? A true faith can endure the frowns of God, it can peep under the vizard when God is angry, and say, "Pater est!" it is my Father that looketh thus angry. It is observable,
that

that three things are called precious in scripture with an emphasis! "The blood of Christ is called, precious blood," 1 Pet. i. 19. The promises are called, "precious promises," 2 Pet. i. 4. The faith of God's elect is called, "precious faith," 2 Pet. i. 1. Thou complaineſt thy heart is dead, wandering, and contracted in duty; O but remember, Christ's blood ſpeaks when thou canſt not: when thy prayer is done, Christ's prayer is ſtill going on; his prayer, is a praying without ceaſing. St. Gregory, is not afraid to ſay, O happy, happy, happy man was Adam, that ever he ſo ſinned and tranſgreſſed; becauſe by this means both he and we have found ſuch plentiful redemption, ſuch ineſtimable mercy, ſuch ſuperabundant grace, ſuch felicity, ſuch eternity, and ſuch life by Chriſt's death! Conſcience is God's preacher in the boſom; a thouſand witneſſes for or againſt a man; a heaven or hell on earth; a great friend, or a great enemy. Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me; firſt, the voice of nature, let this cup paſs from me! ſecondly, the voice of his mediatory office, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. The firſt voice, let this cup paſs, is a great argument of our Saviour's humanity, that he was a man, as well as God,

in that he dreads a dissolution. Christ owed it to himself as a creature to desire the conservation of his being. The latter voice (nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt) expresseth the full and free consent of his will, complying with the will of his Father, in that grand everlasting design of bringing man's soul unto glory. The soul is the life of the body, and Christ is the life of the soul.

From Mr. Fox's Book of Martyrs.

Mr. SAUNDERS.

AND this my conscience is not grounded upon vain fantasy, but upon the infallible verity of God's word. It is an easy thing for them which take Christ for their true pastor, and be the sheep of his pasture, to discern the voice of their true shepherd, from the voice of wolves, hirelings and strangers; for as much as Christ saith, "My sheep hear my voice:" yea, and thereby they shall have the gift to know the right voice of the true shepherd, and so to follow him, and to avoid the contrary, as he also saith; such inward inspiration doth the Holy Ghost put into the children of God, being indeed

indeed taught of God, but otherwise unable to understand the true way of their salvation.

I do hold no heresies, but the doctrine of God, the blessed gospel of Christ; that hold I, that believe I, that have I taught, and that will I never revoke. "Blessed (saith our Christ) be they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for such shall be satisfied." Let us go, yea, let us run to seek treasure, and that with whole purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord, to find such riches in his heavenly word, through his Spirit obtained by prayer.

When I look upon myself, I be astonished and confounded; what have I else to say, but those words of Peter, "Lord, go from me, for I am a sinful man?" but then feel I that sweet comfort, "The word of the Lord is a lanthorn unto my feet, and a light unto my paths;" and this is my comfort in my trouble; then wax I bold with the same Peter to say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of everlasting life." This comfort have I when the giver thereof doth give it.

Mr. HOOPER.

Beware of beholding too much the felicity or misery of this world, for the consideration and

too earnest love or fear of either of them draweth from God. Wherefore think with yourselves as touching the felicity of the world, it is good, but yet no otherwise than it standeth with the favour of God. It is to be kept, but yet so far forth as by keeping of it we lose not God. There is nothing under God but may be kept, so that God, being above all things we have, be not lost; and blessed is that man in whom God's Spirit beareth record, that he is the Son of God, whatsoever troubles he suffer in this troublesome world.

Dr. TAYLOR.

God careth for sparrows, and for the hairs of our heads, I have ever found him more faithful and favourable than is any father or husband.

Mr. BRADFORD.

For as for my doctrine, I am very certain, that it is and was God's truth, and by his grace I resolve to give my life for it; but because I loved not the gospel as sincerely as I ought, therefore doth he thus punish; nay in punishing, he rather blesteth me. Indeed, I thank him more for this prison, than for any parlour: yea,
than

than for any pleasure that ever I had ; for in it I always find God my sweetest and greatest good. For few live godly in Christ Jesus ; few regard the life to come ; few remember the day of judgment ; few remember, how Christ will deny them before his Father, that do deny him here.

His Farewel to Mrs. WARCUP.

Farewel, my dear sister, farewel ; howbeit in the Lord, our Lord, I say farewel. In him shall you fare well, and so much the better, by how much in yourself you fare evil, and shall fare evil. Yours is our Christ wholly, yours, I say, he is, with all that ever he hath : is not this farewel ? Mountains shall move, and the earth shall fall, before you find it otherwise, say that liar satan what he list.

BRADFORD to SAUNDERS.

Ah ! good brother, if I could always have God, his majesty, mercy, heaven, hell, &c. before mine eyes, then should I endure, as St. Paul writeth of Moses, Heb. xi. " He endured " as he that saw him which is invisible."

To Mrs. ———.

Patience and perseverance are the proper notes, whereby God's children are known from counterfeits. Accustom yourself now to see God continually, that he may be all in all unto you; in good things behold his mercy, and apply it to yourself; in evil things and plagues behold his judgments, whereby learn to fear him. Let Christ crucified be your book to study on, and that both night and day.

The soul of man doth not feed upon natural things; why, how then doth it feed? Answer, I think the soul of man doth feed as the angels in heaven, whose feeding is only the pleasure, joy, felicity, and delectation, that they have of God.

ROBERT SAMUEL.

Let us consider the verity of God as invincible, inviolable, and immutable, promising and giving us his faithful soldiers life eternal.

R. GLOVER.

Yea, whosoever hath but a little taste or glimmering how precious a treasure the kingdom of heaven is, will gladly forego both life
and

and goods for the obtaining of it. But the most part now-a-days are like Esop's cock, which when he had found a precious stone, wished rather to have found a barley-corn; so ignorant are they how precious a jewel the word of God is, that they choose rather the things of this world, which being compared to it are less in value than a barley-corn.

He corrected his own distrust in the following manner; What make I of God? is not his power as great in Litchfield, as in Coventry? doth not his promise extend as well to Litchfield, as to Coventry? was he not with Habakuk, Daniel, and Jeremy, in their most dangerous imprisonments? he knoweth what things we have need of; he hath numbered all the hairs of our head. The sparrow falleth not to the ground, without our heavenly Father's will; much more will he care for us if we be not faithless, whom he hath made worthy to be witnesses of his truth. So long as we put our trust in him, we shall never be destitute of his help, neither in prison, in sickness, nor in health, neither in life, nor in death, neither before kings, bishops, or the devil himself, much less one of his ministers shall be able to prevail against us.

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It is no arrogancy nor presumption in any man, to burden God (as it were) with his promise, and of duty to claim and challenge his aid, help and assistance in all our perils, dangers and distress; not in the confidence of our godliness, but in the trust of his promises made in Christ, in whom, and by whom, and for whose sake, whosoever boldly approacheth to the mercy-seat of the Father, is sure to receive whatsoever is expedient or necessary, either for body or soul, in a more bountiful manner than we can wish, or even desire. His word cannot lie: "call upon me in the day of trouble, and "I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me."

LATIMER.

This is to be ignorant, to know many things without Christ; if thou knowest Christ well, thou knowest enough, though thou know no more.

Mr. BRADFORD's Letter to a faithful Woman,
inwardly afflicted.

He that dwelleth, I say, under God's providence and protection, shall be safe; but if we fly from it as Lot fled from Zoar, where God promised him protection, if he had dwelled there

there still, we shall remove to our loss, as he did into the mountains.

Have you not received at his hands sight to see your blindness, and thereto a desirous and seeking heart to see where he lieth in the mid-day, as his dear spouse speaketh of herself in the Canticles: O Joyce, my good Joyce, what a gift is this! Many have some sight, but none this sobbing and sighing, none this seeking which you have, I know, but such as he hath married unto him in his mercies. If you were a market-sheep, you should go in more fat and grassy pasture; if you were for the fair, you should be stall-fed, and want no wealth; but because you are of God's own occupying, therefore you must pasture on the bare common, abiding the storms and tempests that will fall.

For if he giveth you a desire, he will give you the enjoyment of what you desire. He would never have so exercised your faith with temptations as he hath done and doth, if he had not chosen you. Christ and his mercy is the only cause of our election; this Christ, this mercy, and the infallible truth of God remaineth for ever; and if an angel from heaven should tell you the contrary, let him be accursed. Whom look you on? on yourself, on your worthiness,

worthiness, on your thankfulness, on that which God requireth of you, as faith, hope, love, joy, &c. then can you not but waver indeed; for what have you as God requireth, do you believe, hope and love as much as you ought? no, no, nor never can in this life. Your faith should break through all things that are in earth, heaven, or hell, until you come to Christ crucified, and the eternal sweet mercies and goodness of God in him. Here is the resting place, here is your spouse's bed, creep into it, and in your arms of faith embrace him; bewail your weakness, unworthiness, diffidence, &c. and you shall see he will turn to you; nay, I should rather have said, you shall feel he will turn to you.

Mr. SAUNDERS.

And as yet I testify unto you, that the comfort of my sweet Christ, doth drive from my fancy the fear of death. But if my dear husband Christ doth for my tryal leave me alone a little to myself, alas! I know in what case I shall be then; but if for my proof he do so, yet I am sure he will not be long or far from me.

THOMAS

THOMAS TAYLOR.

To pray in the name of Christ, is to pray in the faith of his name, we may pray with the name of Christ in our mouths, and yet not in his name, unless we pray with the faith of Christ in our hearts.

From the Rev. Mr. JAMES HERVEY.

THE doctrine of a Redeemer obeying and dying in our stead, is the very hinge and center of all evangelical revelations; is the very life and soul of all evangelical blessings.

Both St. Peter and St. Paul speak of the blood of sprinkling, 1 Pet. i. 2. Heb. xii. 24. Intimating by this remarkable form of speech, that the death of Christ will be of no advantage to the sinner, unless it be applied to his heart. Indeed, this death is the purchase of every heavenly blessing; this opens the hand, opens the heart of God, and all the stores of his inexhaustible bounty.

Original sin lies quite out of the road of reason's researches; it is among the wonderful things of God's law. If we were ruined by a crime which we committed not, we are recovered by a righteousness which we performed not.

Holiness

Holiness is the health of our souls, and the ease of our minds. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard, was the profession of the apostles; and if applied to practical godliness, is the experience of the christian.

As it is not the robe of state which makes the king, so neither is it the practice of holiness, which makes the christian. An union with Christ, an interest in his merits, and the indwelling presence of his Spirit; these, and nothing short of these, constitute the true christian.

If it be asked, how could one act of disobedience produce such destructive effects? I answer, the reality of the fact, in numberless instances of material nature, is plain to a demonstration; while the manner of operation, remains an impenetrable secret. Every child perceives the former; the great Newton is at a loss for the latter. For which reason, I have always thought it better to believe what God has taught, than attempt to explain what he has concealed.

THERON. Where is the remedy to be had?

ASPACIO. Not on earth, but from heaven. The schools of science cannot discover it; the courts of kings are unable to procure it; the college

college of physicians know not how to prescribe it; but the gospel of our salvation both prescribes and dispenses it. The language of Christ in his holy word is, I will bring her health and cure; and the beginning of our cure is, to be sensible of our disorder. The valley of Achor is a door of hope.

Turn me, O thou God of my salvation, turn me from pursuing phantoms, and attach me to thy blessed self; let me henceforth steer an invariable course to Immanuel's kingdom. May its treasures, as I advance, open to my view, and its glories brighten in my eye. O! may some odours, better, far better, than Sabæan spicy odours, exhale from the delectable hills, and the celestial shores! But chiefly thou eternal Spirit breathe upon my soul, both by thy convincing and comfortable influences! nor ever cease to swell my sails, and speed my progress, till I arrive at the land that is very far off and see the King, the King of Grace and of Glory, in all his ineffable beauty.

Till my interest in the divine Redeemer is ascertained, the spring may bloom, the summer shine, and autumn swell with fruits; but it will be winter, cheerless, gloomy, desolate winter in my soul. And this we should never forget,
that

that the grand end which God proposes, in all his favourable dispensations to fallen man, is, to demonstrate the sovereignty, and advance the glory of his grace.

Has the Lord given you a desire to believe in his dear Son? doubt not, but he will also give you the power. Does God the Lord bring to the birth, and not give strength to bring forth? that be far from him!

Unbelief is in the volume of Revelation declared a capital crime. Unbelief treats God as a liar, because it rejects the testimony which he has bore concerning his beloved Son.

As the telescope to the eye, so is revelation to the understanding; it discovers truths, which, exclusive of such a discovery, had been ever hid from the most sagacious minds. It is strange to the unlearned observer, that this ponderous globe of earth and seas, should wheel its rapid circuit round the sun; but the telescope has rendered this fact clear to a demonstration. It is strange likewise to our natural apprehensions, that we should die in Adam, and be undone by our first parents disobedience; nor less so, that we should be made alive in Christ, and derive our recovery from his imputed righteousness; but revelation makes this doctrine as certain, as it is comfortable.

How

How may I be justified before God, my Maker, my Governor, and my Judge? is an enquiry, of all others, the most interesting and important: it is the main hinge, on which every instance of practical religion turns.—True comfort, willing obedience, holy communion with the divine Majesty, all depend upon this capital point.

God, the almighty Creator, and supreme Governor of the world, having made man, gave him a law, with a penalty annexed, in case of disobedience. This sacred law our fore-father Adam presumptuously broke; and we, his posterity, were involved in his guilt. Or, should that point be controverted, we have undeniably made, by many personal transgressions, his apostacy our own; insomuch, that all have sinned, have forfeited their happiness, and rendered themselves obnoxious to punishment.

A weight of woe more than ten worlds could bear.

May we all be sacred critics! have, not only a refined taste to relish such elegancies of composition, but an awakened heart to feel the energy of such important truths!

ASPACIO. It may not, my dear friend, agree with our natural apprehensions, nor fall in with

the plan which we might have desired for the salvation of mankind, but this is the voice of scripture, and a maxim never to be forgotten, "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways. His righteousness is like the strong mountains, and his judgments are like the great deep:" the former immovable, the latter unsearchable. We are saved by grace through faith; by grace imputing, through faith accepting, the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

"Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting," is evidently written in all I am, all I have, all I do. The knowledge of God is the foundation of all vital religion, and, indeed, is the consummation of human happiness. How highly would the ambitious courtier prize, and how frequently would he use a privy key, that should give him, at all hours, free admittance to his sovereign. This key of admittance, only to an infinitely more exalted Potentate, we all possess in the practice of mental aspirations to God.

Most charming humility! most indearing gentleness! He who rideth upon the heavens as it were upon an horse, and maketh the clouds his chariot, to atone for my pride, and to encourage

courage my hope, disdained not, in the days of his flesh, to ride upon an ass. True joy is a serious thing; it is the child of sedate thought, not the spawn of intemperate mirth.

From Dr. RICHARD SIBBS.

LET us carry this about with us as a principle of holy life, to know that our good is hid up in God, and not in the creature; so that if all help were taken away, yet we have it immediately, purer and better in the fountain. What if there were not a creature in the world to help me, what if all were ~~against~~ me, yet God may make all their powers and endeavours fruitless. Let the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, and let the earth and all rage, as the Psalmist says, and let things run upon a head, come what can come, God is where he was, and God's children are where they were, in regard of the main comfort; they cannot be in such a condition as that they can be deprived of their God, and of his assistance. "From me is thy fruit found." So in the loss of friends, having this and that ~~took~~ from us, ah, but God is not taken from us. He who derives comfort by this or that friend, can supply it

better by his own spirit. If we could conceive all God's ways, then they were not God's ways; for in his ways to us he will so carry them, as he will shew himself to be above and beyond our shallow conceits. If we take with us words of prayer, we shall be sure to vanquish all our spiritual enemies; for faithful prayer works wonders in heaven and earth. What food to that which is ministred to us in the word and sacraments, Christ himself to feed us to life eternal; and what raiment to the raiment of justification, for Christ to cloath these poor souls of ours — poor, naked, beggarly souls.

Since the fall, all our happiness is out of ourselves; it is derived from God in Christ, and it is taken out of the promises of God in the word; for God will be seen in Christ, and God and Christ will be seen in the glass of the ordinances till we come to heaven, and there we shall see face to face: so that now all our happiness is fetched by looking on the love of God out of ourselves, fetched out of the ordinances. There are many excellent, beautiful things in Christ; wonderful grace and comfort. If these be discovered in the word, and we have no senses, and no light, if there be not light in the understanding, God shall want his glory, and we the

the comfort. Therefore, I say, let us turn all our desires into prayers, to maintain perpetual communion and acquaintance with God: Oh! it is a gainful and comfortable acquaintance. When our hearts are right, we cannot but think comfortably of Christ. In the time of desertion and temptation we have grace, but we know it not; a right to comfort, but we feel it not. He that will come to see the height, and breadth, and depth of God's love in Christ, must see the height, and breadth, and depth of his own corruption, and our misery by it out of Christ: and they are good thoughts for us, every day to think of these two objects, the misery of the condition of man out of Christ, and the excellency now that we have in Jesus Christ.

Let it therefore be a singular comfort to us, that in all wants, so in that of friends, when we have none to go to, yet we have God, to whom we may freely pour out our hearts, there being no place in the world that can restrain us from his presence, or his Spirit from us; he can hear us and help us in all places. What a blessed estate is this; none can hinder us from driving this trade with Christ in heaven. He that can pray, can never be much uncomfortable. It would dead the heart of any man, to

perform service where it should not be accepted, and the eye turned aside, not vouchsafing a gracious look upon it; this would be a killing of all comfortable endeavours. But when all that is good is accepted, and what is amiss is pardoned; when a broken desire, a cup of cold water shall not go unrespected, nay, unrewarded, what can we desire more.

It is infidelity which is dishonourable to God, and uncomfortable to ourselves; that makes us so barren and cold in duties; only let our care be to approve our hearts unto Christ.

We ought to take notice of the works of God in creation and providence, when we see the plants, stars, and such like, or else we dishonour God. What then should we do for his gifts and graces in his children, that are above these in dignity, should we not take notice of what is graciously good, and praise God for it? Some are content to have benefit by Christ, as his righteousness to cover them, &c. but they desire not grace to entertain Christ; but a heart truly gracious, desireth both to delight in Christ, and that Christ may delight in it. It desireth grace together with mercy, holiness with happiness.

Christ

Christ maketh us a feast ; a feast first with regard of the choice rarities we have in Christ : we have the best, and the best of the best. The comforts we have from Christ, are the best comforts, the peace the best peace, the privileges the highest privileges ; his flesh crucified for us to satisfy divine justice, is meat indeed ; his blood shed for us, is drink indeed ; that is the best, the only meat and drink to refresh our souls, because these feed our souls, and that to eternal life. The love of God the Father in giving Christ to death, and Christ's love in giving himself, together with full contentment to divine justice, this gift it is that the soul especially feeds on. What could Christ give us better than himself to feed on ? he thought nothing else worthy for the soul to feed on ; and this it daily feeds on, as daily guilt ariseth, from the breaking out of the remainder of corruption.

No man knows how to use earthly things but a Christian, that hath first pitched his love on Christ, then seeing all things in him, and in all them a beam of that love of his, intending happiness to him, so he knows how to use every thing in order.

There is no envy in spiritual things, wherein whatsoever the one hath, the other hath not the less.

In a feast, because it is intended for rejoicing, there is music; and what music like to the sweet harmony between God reconciled in Christ and the soul, and between the soul and itself, in inward peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, shedding the love of Christ in the soul. We do not only joy, but glory under hope of glory, and in afflictions, and in God now as ours, in whom now, by Christ, we have an interest. When we come sorrowful to this feast, we depart chearful. This, as David's harp, stills all passions and distempers of spirit.

God's children never totally fall from grace; though they sleep, yet their heart is awake; the grace of God sometimes fails in the outward action, in the field, when, yet it retireth to the heart, in which fort it is impregnable. As Christ said of Lazarus, so a man may say of a Christian in his worst state; his life is in him still; he is not dead, but sleeps; his heart waketh. This is sound doctrine and comfortable, agreeable to scripture, and the experience of God's people. We must not lose it therefore, but make use of it against the time of temptation. There are some pulses that discover life in the sickest man, so there are some breathings and spiritual motions of the heart, that will
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comfort in such times. These two never fail on God's part; his love which is unchangeable, and his grace a fruit of his love; and two on our part, the impression of that love, and the gracious work of the new creature. Christ never dies (saith the apostle) as he never dies in himself (after his resurrection) so he never dies in his children, there is always spiritual life.

God speaks to us after the manner of men, but he works in us as the great God. He speaks to us as a man in our own language sweetly, but he works in us almightily, after a powerful manner as God; so we must understand such phrases as these, "I knock".

Christ hath never enough of us, nor we have never enough of him, till we be in heaven, and therefore we pray, "thy kingdom come." What's in our joy, if Christ be not there? worldly joy, which cleaves to things worse than itself. If our hearts that are naturally cold, be heated with the love of divine things, certainly we may say, Christ hath shined here first; for naturally our hearts are of a cold temper; there is no such thing as spiritual love growing in our natures and hearts. You have many poor souls helped with this, who cannot
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tell whether Christ loves them or no, but this helps them a little, they can find undoubted arguments of their love to Christ, his image, and servants, and of relishing the word, tho' they find much corruption; and this their love to divine things tells them by demonstrations from the effects, that Christ loves them, because there is no love to divine and supernatural things, without the love of Christ first.

This is the main point in religion, and the comfort of christians, to see their perfection in Jesus Christ, &c. to be lost in themselves (as it were) and to be only found in him, not having their own righteousness, but the righteousness of God in him. This is a mystery which none knows but a believing soul; none see corruption more, none see themselves freed more; they have an inward sight to see corruption, and an inward faith to see God takes not advantage at it.

To have reasons ready from scripture is an excellent thing, when we are able to justify whatsoever we do by the word, against all the quarrels of our own hearts and others. This should teach us the necessity of dependance upon Christ, for whatsoever we have, or would have, which dependance upon Christ is the life
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of our life, the soul of our souls. We find experience of the grace of Christ, especially when we stir up ourselves to endeavour. Many arguments there be to shew that the soul is a precious thing; it was breathed by God at first; Christ gave his life to redeem it: but this is an especial one, that God hath ordained and established a ministry and watchmen over it. Take those who at any time have had experience of the love of God, and of Christ formerly; take them at the worst, you shall find from them some sparkles of grace, broken speeches of tryed secret comfort, some inward strength and struggling against corruptions; their spirits endeavouring to recover themselves from sinking too low, and also something withstanding both despair and corruption. Take a christian at the worst, there will be a discovery of the Spirit of Christ left in him, notwithstanding all desertion. This is universally in all in some measure, though perhaps it is not discerned by a christian himself, but by those that are able to judge; sometimes others can read our evidences better than ourselves. A christian that is in temptation cannot judge of his own state, but others can, and so at the worst he hath always somewhat left in him, whereby he may be comforted.

ed. Christ never leaves his church and children that are his, wholly; those that are wholly left, they never had saving grace. As Achitophel, Cain, Saul, and Judas, were left to themselves; but for the children of God, if ever they found the power of sanctifying grace, Christ whom he loves, he loves to the end, from whom he departs not, unless he leaves somewhat behind him, that sets an edge upon the desires to seek after him. To speak a little of the matter of the charge, "I am sick of love." I love him because I have found comfort, strength and sweetness from him; that I cannot be without him. To be love-sick then in the presence of the church, is to have strong affections to Christ, from which comes wondrous disquietness of spirit in his absence. There are few in the world sick of this disease; I would there were more sick of the love of Christ. There are many that surfeit rather of fulness, who think we have too much of this manna, of this preaching of the gospel; there is too much of this knowledge of the ordinances, these are not sick of love. Doth Christ think us fair for the good we have? doth he not altogether value us by our ill? and shall we believe Satan, who joins with the distempers of melancholly we are in,

in, which he useth as a weapon against the soul, to make us think otherwise? Satan is not only a murderer, but a liar from the beginning. We must not believe an enemy and a liar withal; but consider how Christ and the church judgeth, that have better discerning; and let us beware, we be not satans to ourselves, for if there were no devil, yet in the time of temptation and desertion we are subject to discouragement, to give false witness against ourselves; we are apt to look on the dark side of the clouds.

It is not enough to know that there are excellencies in Christ to draw us to him, but there must be a sight of our misery; what beggars we are, and how indebted. Before we are in Christ we are not our own; the devil lays claim to us that we are his; death lays claim to us we are under sin; we cannot satisfy one of a thousand, therefore this inforceth us to make out to join with him that can discharge all our debts, answer all our suits, and nonsuit satan in the court of heaven. The world thinks them a company of silly mean people, that make choice of Christ, religion, the word, and such things: but here is a justification of their choice, they choose him that is the chiefest of ten thousand. When is the word of God precious

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cious as gold, sweeter than honey and the honey-comb, but when the former commendation takes place ; when the word is perfect, converting the soul ? and when is it sure, making wise the simple, and where the fear of the Lord is clean ? there it is more to be desired than fine gold, and sweeter than the honey-comb ! so the church here, finding first of all the word to be a converting word, and giving understanding to the simple, she cannot but speak of the sweetness of the word of Christ : his lips are as lillies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh ; his mouth is most sweet ! Thus a man may know his estate in grace, by his relish of the word ; there is a heavenly and divine relish in the word of God : as for instance, take the doctrine of his providence, that all things shall work together for the best to them that love God, what a sweet word is this ! a whole kingdom is not worth this promise, that whatever befalls a christian in this world, there is an over-ruling providence to sway all to good ; to help forward his eternal good ; that Christ will be present with us in all conditions, that he will give us his holy Spirit, that if we confess our sins and lay them open, he is merciful to forgive them ; that if our sins were as red as scarlet,

scarlet, they shall all be white as wool. What kind of incredible sweetness is in these to a heart that is prepared for these comforts? The doctrine of reconciliation, of adoption, of glory to come, of the offices of Christ, and such like; how sweet are they, they relish wonderfully to a sanctified soul. These truths that come out of the mouth of Christ, and out of the ministry concerning Christ, they are most sweet of all. Oh! how sweet were those words to the poor man? "thy sins are forgiven thee!" Do you think they went not to his heart? The best discovery of a true affection to Christ, and of a true state in grace, is from our affection to the word of Christ: wherever there is an interest in Christ, there is a high respect to the word.

If our hearts tells us, we have no disposition to pardon, to be at peace and agreement; then do we but take God's name in vain, when we ask him to forgive our sins and we continue in malice.

The church is always beloved, a spouse, a friend; and in that state of grace, how many intercourses be there, the foundation of God's love to us, and grace in us always remaining the same; once beloved, for ever beloved. A christian, by the power of God's Spirit in him,
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is sensible of the contrarieties in him, complains, and is ashamed for the same; but an hypocrite is not so, he is not sensible of his sleepiness. If we should ask what is the reason there be so many that apostazied, fall away, grow prophane, and are so unfruitful under the gospel, notwithstanding they hear so much as they do; the answer is, their souls were never founded and bottomed upon this, that it is the word of God, and divine truth; so as to be able to say, I have felt it by experience, that it is the voice of Christ. How shall we know whether Christ dwells in our hearts or not? we may know by the servants what master dwells in an house: if Christ be in the soul, there comes out of the house good speeches, and we watch the senses, so as there comes nothing in to defile the soul, and disturb Christ, and nothing goes out to offend God.

Again, where Christ comes, assistance comes there. When Christ was born, all Jerusalem was in an uproar: so when Christ is born in the soul, there is an uproar; corruption arms itself against grace; there is a combat betwixt flesh and Spirit; but Christ subdues the flesh by little and little.

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If we find a spirit to pray, a spirit to wait and to hold out, it is an argument, that God either hath or will hear those prayers. It is a sign of future victory, when we are discontent with our present ill state.

As in the gloomiest day that ever was, there was light enough to make it day, and to distinguish it from night, (though the sun did not shine;) so in the most disconsolate state of a christian soul, there is light enough in the soul to shew that the sun of righteousness is there, and that Christ hath shined upon the soul; that it is day with the soul, and not night. It is for our good, to prepare us for farther blessings, to mortify and subdue our corruptions, to enlarge the capacity of the soul, that the Lord absents himself: therefore Bernard saith well, "Christ comes and goes away for our good."

It is sufficient for us, if God will bring us any way to heaven, as the blessed apostle saith, Phil. iii. 11. "If by any means I might attain
"to the resurrection of the dead," either thro' thick or thin, if God will bring me to heaven, it is no matter. Take a christian at the worst, when he is asleep, he loves Christ; he will do nothing against him; "I can do nothing (saith
"Paul) against the truth, but for the truth;"

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he will do nothing against the cause of religion; there is a new nature in him, that he cannot do otherwise; he cannot but love, he cannot sin with a full purpose, nor speak against a good cause, because he hath a new nature that leads him another way: Christ is her beloved's still, though she sleep; therefore, take a christian at the lowest, his heart yearns after Christ. How shall we know light, to be light? it carries evidence in itself that it is light. How know we that the fire is hot? because it carries evidence in itself that it is so. So if you ask, How we know the word of God to be the word of God? it carries in itself inbred arguments and characters, that the soul can say, none but this word can be the word of God; it hath such a majesty and power, to cast down and to raise up, and to comfort and to direct with such power and majesty, that it carries with it its own evidence, and it is argument enough for it.

A sanctified fancy will make every creature a ladder to heaven.

The greatest and hardest work of a christian is least in sight, which is the well ordering of his heart. It is a never-failing rule of discerning a man to be in the state of grace, when
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he finds every condition draw him nearer to God. Come to this point once, trust God I ought, therefore trust God I will, come what may, or will. Here is a great mercy, that when David had (a little) let go his hold of God, yet God would not let go his hold of him. When the soul leaves God once, it loses its way and itself. All grace and holiness, all sweetness of affection, all power and wisdom, &c. as it is in him, so it is from him; and we come to conceive these properties to be in God, by feeling the comfort and power of them in ourselves.

In those that are truly converted, all saving truths are transcribed out of the scripture into their hearts; they are taught of God: so as they find all truths, both concerning the simple estate, and the gracious and happy estate of man, in themselves; they carry a divinity in them and about them; so as from a saving feeling they can speak of conversion, of grace, and the comforts of the Spirit, &c. and from this acquaintance are ready to yield, and give up themselves to truth revealed, and to God speaking by it.

Whatsoever is beside God, is but a creature; and whatsoever is in the creature, is but borrowed,

rowed, and at God's disposal and changeable; or else it were not a creature.

O! if we had but faith to answer those glorious truths which God hath revealed, what manner of lives should we lead! The devil fears not us, but him whom we fly unto for succour; it is the ground we stand on secures us, not ourselves. To begin with troubles of the spirit, which indeed are the spirit of troubles; as disabling that which should uphold a man in all his troubles. If Christ be the physician, it is no matter of how long continuance the disease be. God will have his children, first or last, to feel what sin is, and how much they are beholding to him for Christ. Whosoever is the instrument of any good, yet salvation is of the Lord; whatsoever brings it, he sends it.

That God is our God, more cannot be said, and less will not serve the turn. O beloved! the whole world cannot weigh against this one comfort, that God is ours. A moth may corrupt, a thief may take away that we have here, but who can take our God away? Flesh and blood think nothing is cared for, but what it seeth cared for by itself. It hath no eyes to see a guard of providence, a guard of angels: it takes no knowledge, that that is best cared for that
God

God cares for. God and ours joined together, make up the full comfort of a christian. "God," there is all to be had ; but what is that to me, unless he be my God ?

From Mr. ELTON's Exposition of the
Epistle to the Colossians.

LET this therefore sink and settle into every one of our hearts, that Jesus Christ is our keeper ; and it will make us love him, cleave to him, and be of good courage in the waves of the sea of this troublesome world, and fear nothing. True friends will draw near to comfort us in distress, when strangers will flee from us ; and if the world be a stranger to thee, and thou to it, what shall be able to comfort thee ? surely nothing : and therefore never rest, till thou be familiarly acquainted with the word of God : put it not from thee to scholars and divines ; no, no, if thou look for comfort in life, in death, in the day of judgment, labour thou in plentiful measure to be acquainted with the word of God : there is no mere creature (either in heaven or in earth) worthy to be joined with God, and to have any part

of divine worship; he is God over all, and he alone is to be magnified and praised for ever.

True and infallible marks and notes of canonical scripture, viz. 1. The evidence of the Spirit imprinted in the scripture, and shewing itself in every line of it: 2. The purity and perfection of scripture: 3. The consent of one part with another: 4. The antiquity of it: 5. The majesty of it in plainness of speech: 6. The power of it over the conscience: 7. The wonderful effect of it; the gospel being contrary to man's corrupt nature, yet hath it in all ages won men to it: 8. The certain prophecies of things to come, which none but God could foretell: 9. The admirable preservation of it, against time and tyrants: 10. The devil's rage against them that follow it: 11. The judgments of God, that have befallen such as opposed it: 12. The constant sufferings of many millions, that have shed their blood for the gospel of Christ.

“Hid since the world began.” The inference upon this by way of use might be to prove, that the sending of Christ into the world was decreed; that the permission of the fall of man was decreed, and his redemption by Christ also was decreed, in the eternal counsel of God;

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but I pass by these things: yet let the eternity of the gospel be thought on by as many as truly believe the promise of the gospel, it may serve to strengthen and confirm them in never failing comfort: for as many as by true faith rest upon the promise of the gospel, touching remission of sins and justification by Christ, may be sure that the ground on which they rest will never fail them. The gospel is eternal, coming out of the bosom of God the Father; therefore as immutable and unchangeable as God himself: and as impossible it is, that he that doth rest upon the promise of the gospel, touching life and salvation, should be deceived, as he that resteth upon God himself, who cannot possibly lie nor deceive: "All the promises of God in Christ, are yea, and amen," saith the apostle, 2 Cor. i. 20. that is, they are certain and infallible.

The gospel was not revealed for many generations to the Gentiles; to enquire into the cause were curiosity and bold presumption: we are rather to adore the secret judgments of God; and for the revelation of the gospel to us, to magnify the mercy of God, and to become thankful. It is the whole joy and felicity of the saints and angels in heaven, to glorify God;

they are so ravished with the love of it, that they never wax weary in sounding forth the praise of God, Rev. iv. 8.

Whatsoever is to be known and believed of us to salvation, is in one place of scripture or other plainly set forth, and easily to be understood of all them that read diligently, mark attentively, pray earnestly, and judge humbly. We shall find, that where any thing necessary to be known to salvation is delivered by trope or figure, or any thing obscurely, the same in another place is explained. We are therefore to know and acknowledge, that God is every where present, though not seen of us. And if we would farther be resolved of this point, for the ground of it, consider we but that which experience may teach us, namely this, men many times who sin in secret, and have no eye of man looking on them, yet notwithstanding they tremble and fear: whence comes this? surely their own conscience tells them, that their close and secret sins are seen of God, though he be not seen of them.

The gospel is then powerful in thee, when nothing in thee by nature is able to withstand the power of it; when thou dost feel it overruling thine own reason, and bearing down the rebellion

rebellion of thy will and affections, and what sin soever is most pleasing unto thee. For reason teacheth that truth is simple and one; saving truth is the truth of the gospel, and there is but one gospel; one in number, no more; and therefore but one way of salvation, that is by true faith in Christ. And in the life to come (as many as go to heaven) shall see God in a most excellent manner, and with such comfort, as no heart can comprehend. The more godly thou art, the more need hast thou to pray; because satan will be busiest against thee, and thou art the readiest to be puffed up with a conceit of thy knowledge and remembrance of holy things. And withal remember, if the Lord give thee grace, to persevere in prayer, he deferring to grant thy request, that is a more excellent gift than the thing thou suest for, and exceeding pleasing to God.

From Mr. GURNALL's Christian Armour.

THAT which brings comfort to the greatest saint in a time of distress, is the same which comforts the meanest in the family, and that is the love and favour of God, interest in Christ, &c. the precious promises, which in
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him are yea, and amen. Whatsoever thou be-
gest of God, forget not a sincere heart. All
the private ends of a sincere soul are swallowed
up in this, that he may do the will of God in
his generation; this he heartily prays for, "thy
"will be done," this is his study to find what
is the good and acceptable will of God, which
is the cause why he loves the Bible above all
other books, because in none but that, can he
find what is the mind and will of God concern-
ing him.

No pity dwells in a devil's heart: none sink
so deep in hell, as those that fall into it with a
stumble at Christ. There is a vast difference
between conversing with ordinances, and hav-
ing communion with God. God counts him-
self forgot, when we forget his word, and keep
not close to that. Whatever we do, or would
have, prayer is necessary, be it small or great.
Where canst thou be, or what can thy eye light
upon, that may not bring God to thy remem-
brance, and give thee a fair occasion to lift up
thy heart to him? He is present with thee in
every company; thou canst use no creature,
enjoy no mercy, feel no affliction, and put thy
hand to no work, which will not prompt thee,
either to beg his counsel, seek his blessing,

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crave his protection, or give him praise for his gracious providence over thee. God is every where to be found, at church and at home, with our family, and in our closet; and therefore we are to pray every where. Oh! what a comfort is it to a gracious soul, that he can never be out of God's sight or hearing, wherever he is thrown, and therefore never out of his care! for it is ought of sight out of mind. This is the glorious privilege of every saint on earth, who when he prays, hath liberty to come up to the throne of God, surrounded with glorious angels. O thank our good friend and brother, the Lord Jesus Christ for this. There is but one true rule, the word of God; and therefore we may soon know which is false.

A soul that truly loves Christ, delights in holiness; all his strength is laid out upon them; may he but excel in this one thing, be more holy, more heavenly, he will give others leave to run before him in any thing else. But the christian hath one standing rule, the word of God; able to make the man of God perfect: now he that would excel in the power of holiness, must study this. Thus true holiness is that which is derived from Christ, when the soul sets Christ in his word, and Christ in his example

example before him, and labours to draw every line in his life by these: O! this is a sweet way indeed to maintain the power of holiness.

God sometimes corrects with outward crosses, but smiles with inward manifestations, and then wipes them, as I may so say, with a rosemary rod; the one sweetens and alleviates the other. At another time he sends a cross, and incloseth a frown in it: indeed God often sends so many troops of various afflictions to quarter upon some one christian, that it puts him hard to it to bid all welcome, and entertain them with patience: yea, it would pose any one (that knows not what service the word of God doth the christian, and the supplies it brings him in) to conceive how his spirit should be kept, and his faith from being eaten up, and swallowed into despair by them; but the word of God bears all the charges he is at: this is his counsellor and comforter. God's wounds cure, sins kisses kill: there is not another sword like this in all the world, that can cure with cutting. This is the way of God to lead us to God; yea, the only way: no way will bring us to God, but this of the word; neither can we walk in this way of God, if we be ignorant of it. Wouldst thou come to the true knowledge
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of sin, this also is a notion to be found no where else: the scripture alone dissects the whole body of sin, and reads to us a perfect anatomical lecture upon its most minute and secret parts: this discovers the ulcers of our wicked hearts, which thousands die of, and through ignorance of the scriptures, can never come to know what their disease is. Were there no devil, yet we should have our hands full in resisting the corruptions of our own hearts.

“Go tell my disciples, and Peter:”—as if Christ had said, before let his sad heart be comforted with this news, that he may know that I am friends with him, for all his late cowardice. But is not this matter of great joy, that satan hath no power there, where the saints happiness lies? What hast thou (christian) which thou needest value that is not there? thy Christ is there, thy heart also, which lives in the bosom of its beloved. None give Christ an evil word, but those who never were his subjects.

Knowledge is the key, Luke xi. 52. Christ the door, John xv. Christ opens heaven, knowledge opens Christ: O take heed therefore of pride, which will soon make thee a stranger at the throne of grace: pride takes little delight in
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begging. If it be but in some affliction (while we are here) how disconsolate are we, if God's face be a little overcast, and he doth not own us in our distress? Truth finds few that love her gratis, and these few only will suffer with truth, and for it. Thou knowest the happiness of serving a holy God; surely then thou hast an answer ready by thee, against this wicked one comes to draw thee to sin? Can you expect truth from a liar, and comfort from an enemy? The very strength of some temptations lies in the concealing of them; and the very revealing of them to some faithful friend, gives the soul present ease. Satan tempts not when he will, but when God pleaseth: the christian, when fullest of divine consolations, is but a glass without a foot; he cannot stand or hold what he hath receiv'd any longer, than God holds him in his strong hand.

The study of the word, and the reading of it, differ as much as the friendship of such who every day converse lovingly together, doth from the acquaintance one hath with a stranger at an inn, or whom he salutes as he passeth by in the street. Meditation to the sermon, is what the harrow is to the seed; it covers those truths which else might have been picked up, or washed

washed away. Art thou setting thy face towards an ordinance, where thou art sure to meet satan, who will be disturbing thee with worldly thoughts, and may be worse? let God know from thy mouth, whither thou art going, and what thy fears are. Never doth a soul march in so goodly order, as when it puts itself under the conduct of God. If God loves a soul, he will bring him back to the word with shame and sorrow.

Ejaculatory prayer, is a sovereign means to allay the christian's affections to the world; one of the worst enemies he hath in the field against him, for it choaks the soul, thickens the christian's spirit, and changes his very complexion. The holy martyrs have with one bucket of this spiritual water, quenched the scorching flames of that furious element, into which those persecuting enemies have thrown them (the scriptures.) It is worth parting with our best friends on earth, to enjoy communication with the God of heaven: one called his friends thieves, because they stole time from him. Abraham went indeed he knew not whither, but he did not go with he knew not who.

Truth is sure and hath a firm bottom, Psal. xix. 7. We may lay the whole weight of our souls

souls upon it, and yet not crack under us : cleave to the truth, and it will stick to thee ; it will go with thee to prison, banishment ; yea, stake itself, and bare thy charges whenever thou goest upon her errand. Indeed the grand truths and chief notions found in the scriptures, are so connatural to the principles of grace, which the same holy Spirit (who is the inditer of them) hath planted in the hearts of all the saints, that their souls even spring and leap at the reading of them, as the babe did in Elizabeth's womb, at the salutation of the virgin Mary. May a particular man be known from a thousand others, by his face, voice, or handwriting ? certainly then it cannot seem strange, that the God of heaven should be discovered from his forry creature, by his voice and writing in the holy scripture. Do we not see, that he hath interwoven his glorious name so in the works of creation, that they speak his power and godhead, and call him maker in their thoughts, who never read the Bible or heard of such a book ?

None comes so sharp set to the word (which is the saint's food to strengthen his grace) as the christian, that takes prayer in his way to the ordinances. Christ's satisfaction worn by faith,

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is the sign that distinguisheth God's friends from his enemies: the scarlet thread on Rahab's window, kept the destroying sword out of her house; and the blood of Christ pleaded by faith, will keep the soul from receiving any hurt at the hand of Divine Justice.

He that prayeth, invites God into his farther acquaintance, and soon shall have it. And to be sure, the right end of any business is to begin with God, and enjoin him to help us. Thou canst not over ask; thou mayst draw thine arrow to the head, and yet not overshoot the power of God; even when thou hast drawn thy desires to the highest pitch, he will be above thee, for "he is able to do exceedingly above what we can ask or think." A vain heart, and a strong temptation together, makes sad work when God stands by, and gives satan leave to practice upon it. O! holy soul, get thee alone if thou wouldst have Christ give thee his love: knowest thou not thou hast a modest husband? indeed he gives the soul not his embraces in a croud, nor the kisses of his lips in the market.

As God hath strange punishments for the wicked, so he hath strange expressions of love and mercy for sincere souls. He loves to outdo their highest expectations; kiss, robe, feast, all

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in one day ; and that the first day of his return. Yea, God who bids us be most tender of his lambs, is much more tender of them himself.

'Tis satan buffets, man persecutes me, but God who gives them both power.

The less rest the soul hath in God and his promise, concerning future events, the less strength it will find to bear them when the pinch comes.

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62 Every event is the product of God's providence ; not a sparrow, much less a saint, falls to the ground by poverty, sickness, persecution, &c. but the hand of God is in it. God hath put in a caution, " he will never leave thee, " nor forsake thee ;" he that enables thee in one condition, will in another. At the first moment of thy spiritual life, suffering grace was infused, as well as praying grace. Christian, hath not God secretly instructed thee by his Spirit from the word, how to read the short-hand of his providence ? dost not thou know, that the saints afflictions stand for blessings ?

Contention is uncomfortable with whomsoever it is we fall out, neighbour or friend, wife or husband, children or servants ; but worst of all with God.

Engage

Engage God, and the back-door is shut, no enemy can come behind thee ; yea, thine enemy shall fall before thee. Hadst thou the empire of the world, and all nations creeping at thy feet, as once the beasts did to Adam, and thy life as long as Methusaleth's twice told to enjoy it in, without the interposition of one cloud all the while to darken the glory of this thy royalty, yet supposing thee to be one to whom God is an enemy, I would choose sooner to be the worm under thy foot, the toad in the ditch, than be thy miserable self in a palace. Take hold of Christ, and thou hast hold of God's arm ; he cannot strike the soul that holds thereby.

He only knows aright how to live in the world, that hath learnt to die to the world. Make a daily resignation of thyself up to the will of God ; indeed this should be the lock of the night, and the key of the morning. We should open and shut our eyes with this ; recommending ourselves into the hands of God. He that wrestles with God, need not fear the face of death or danger. Prayer engageth God's strength and wisdom for our help. God can make sudden alteration in thy private affairs, christian : how wouldst thou in thy per-

fect health and strength, endure to hear the message of death? If God should, before any lingering illness hath brought thee into some acquaintance with death, say no more, but up and die, as once to Moses, "Art thou shod for such a journey?" couldst thou say, good is the word of the Lord?

It was the speech of a holy man, after God had made that sweet place, Matt. xi. 28. the messenger to open his dungeon of soul-trouble, that he had better be without meat, drink, light, air, earth, life and all, than without this one comfortable scripture. If one single promise, like an ear of corn rubbed in the hand of faith, and applied by the Spirit of Christ, can afford such a full satisfying meal of joy to a hungry bitten pining soul, O! what price can we set on the whole field of the scripture, which stands so thick with promises every way so cordial as this.

When Cain sinned, see how he falls, farther and farther, like a stone down a hill; never stays, till he comes to the bottom of despair: so true is that, 2 Tim. ii. 13. "Evil men shall wax worse and worse." But now when a saint falls, he riseth; because when he falls, he hath a principle of life to cry out to Christ, as

flirs him up to help ; “ Lord, fave me,” faid Peter (when he began to fink) and prefently Chrift’s hand is put forth ; he chides him for his unbelief, but he helps him.

The faint is often compared to Chrift’s garden and orchard ; with this fword of the word he keeps this his orchard from being robbed : there would not long hang any of the fweet fruit, (either graces or comforts) upon their foulds, were not this great robber fatan kept off with the point of this fword. O ! this fword of God is a terror to him, he cannot for his life overcome the dread of it. Let Chrift but fay, “ it is written,” and the foul fiend runs away, with more confufion and terror than Caligula at a crack of thunder.

Satan’s power being limited, as he cannot hurt the being of God, fo he cannot pry into the bofom of God ; he knows not man’s, much lefs the thoughts of God. Bernard’s three questions, are worth the asking ourfelves in any enterprize. Is it lawful ? may I do it and not fin ? Is it becoming me as a chriftian ? may I do it, and not wrong my profeflion ? Is it expedient ? may I do it, and not offend my weak brother ?

By the carriage and behaviour of ourselves in religious duties, we speak what our thoughts are of God himself. He that performs them with a holy awe upon his spirit, and comes to them filled with faith and fear, with joy and trembling, he plainly declares that he believes God to be a great God, and a good God; a glorious majesty and a gracious: but he that is slightly and slovenly in them, tells God himself to his face, that he hath mean and low thoughts of him. The misbehaviour of a person in religious duties, ariseth from his misapprehensions of God whom he worships. "Their souls shall live that seek the Lord," Psal. lxi. 32. and their souls must needs die that seek not God here. The husbandman may as well expect a crop of corn, where he never plowed and sowed, and the tradesman to grow rich, who never opens his shop-doors to let customers in; as he to thrive in grace and comfort, that converseth not with the duties of religion. The great things God doth for his people, are got in communion with him.

Necessity was the heathen's school-master to teach contentment, but faith must be the christian's. He is the christian indeed, that lays aside a good portion of time daily, in the
midst

midst of all his worldly occasions, for communion with God: whoever he compounds with and pays short, he dares not make bold with God, to serve him by halves; he shall have the time devoted to him, tho' others are put off with the less; like that devout man, who when the time of his devotions came, what company soever he was with, would take his leave of them, with this fair excuse, "he had a friend" "that staid to speak with him," (he meant his God.)

The world does by the christian, as the little child by the mother; if it cannot keep the mother from going out, then it will cry after her, to go with her. If the world cannot keep us from going to religious duties, then it will cry to be taken along with us, and much ado to part it and the affections.

Prayer is the proper key to unlock God's heart; and he alone can open our understandings, and satisfy our scruples. David had a word to hope in as well as a God; but it was the word of God. Even when a saint falls into a sin, in its nature presumptuous, they do not commit it so presumptuously as others; there is a part true to God in their bosoms, though over-voted. The habitation which

pleaseth God most, is thy heart; but it must be a believing heart, Eph. iii. 17. O! how dare you sleep a night in that house, where God doth not dwell? and he dwells not in thee, if thou carriest an unbelieving heart in thy bosom.

The scripture is not a book to be read in the lowest form in Christ's school only; but be-
seeming the highest scholar, that seems most fit for a remove to heaven's academy. It is not only of use to make a christian by conversion, but to make him perfect also, 2 Tim. iii. 15. If thou canst heartily pray for love to Christ, faith on him, or any other grace, feeling the want of them, as a hungry man doth of his food, thou mayst conclude safely there is this principle of new life. When the father gives his child the whole orchard, it were folly to question, whether he gives him this apple or that in it: "All things are yours, and you are
" Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 22. The reconciled soul hath a right to all. This little word (father,) lisped forth in prayer by a child of God, exceeds the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and all the so famed orators in the world. Prayer must be the key of the morning, and lock of the night. The saint has as quick a
sense

sense to taste the sweetness of a temporal mercy, as another; but his heart being spiritual, and so acquainted with higher enjoyments, he desires with Luther that God would not put him off with these shells of blessings. Not the least mercy he gives, but he draws forth his soul and heart with it; even in his afflicting providences, where he seems to shew least love, there his heart overflows with it. He is a good paymaster for his peoples zeal; never did fervent prayer find cold welcome with him. Let the prayer be never so pithy, the posture of the body never so devout, the voice never so loud, if the affections of the heart be not drawn out after God in the duty, he disdains and rejects it, because it doth not correspond with the dear affections which God expresseth to us. Ply the throne of grace; he is the best student in divinity, that studies most upon his knees: it were good after our duties, to sort the ingredients of which they are made up; what grace contributed, and what gifts, and what pride; and when all the heterogenial stuff is severed, you shall see in what a little compass the actings of duty will lie.

The worldling that goes not through his closet into his shop in the morning, when he
enters

enters upon his business, no wonder if he returns not at night by his closet in thankfulness to God. It is fit we should begin and end the day with his praise, who begins and ends it for us with his mercy. He that closes his eyes at night without prayer, lies down before his bed is made: he is like a foolish captain in a gar-rison, who betakes himself to his rest, before he hath set the watch for the city's safe-guard.

Worldly business! this is the great leviathan that swallows up all the thoughts of heaven and hell, in many men's hearts. Were we oftner in a day sucking in, as it were, fresh air, and new influences of grace from God, our spirits could not be possibly so much poisoned with worldly affections. He that can wrestle with God, need not fear the face of death and danger. Prayer engageth God's strength and wisdom, for our help. No such pick-lock to open the heart as love! Whoever may be the instrument of any trouble to a saint, the rod or sword is at God's disposal.

Look carefully to this every moment; leave thyself and ways in God's hand, as the phrase is, Psal. x. 14. and at night look again, how well God hath looked to his trust; and sleep not, till thou hast affected thy heart with his
faithfulness,

faithfulness, and laid a stronger charge on thy heart to trust itself again in God's keeping in the night.

Speak, soul ; dost please thyself in choosing Christ ? dost go to Christ, not only for safety, but delight ? so the spouse, " I sat under his shadow with great delight." A good man (we say) will be as good as his word ; to be sure, a good God will. The christian cannot come to God, when he hath not by him what he wants.

Were saints to fight it out in open field by the strength of their own grace, then the strong were more likely to stand, and the weak to fall in battle ; but both castled in the covenant are safe alike. One Almighty, is more than many mighties : all these mighty sins and devils, make not any almighty sin, or an almighty devil : the very considering God, to be God, supposeth him almighty to pardon, as well as to avenge, and this is some relief ; but then to consider, it is almighty power in bond and covenant to pardon, this is more.

Christ and satan divide the whole world ; Christ will bear no equal, and satan no superior, and therefore hold in with both thou canst not.

None

None will have such a sad parting with Christ, as those who went half way with him, and then left him.

Satan's advantage is great, when grace is not in exercise ; he hunts the christian by the scent of his own feet, and if once he doth but smell which way thy heart inclines, he knows how to take the hint : if but one door be unbolted, one work unarmed, one grace off its carriage, here is advantage enough. Praying is the same to the new creature, as crying is to the natural ; the child is not learned by art or example to cry, but instructed by nature, it comes into the world crying. Praying is not a lesson got by forms and rules of art, but flowing from principles of new life itself. Study may make one a great scholar in the scriptures, but prayer makes a wise christian, as it obtains sanctified knowledge, without which it is no perfect gift. He is the best student in divinity, that studies most upon his knees. David compares the word for sweetness to the honey and the honeycomb ; indeed it is so full, that at first reading some sweetnesses will now and then drop from it ; but he that doth not press it by meditation, leaves the most behind. It was a sweet speech of a dying faint, that he was going to change
his

his place, but not his company. A christian that is frequent in these ejaculations (meaning prayer) when he goes to pray more solemnly, he goes not from the world to God, but from God to God. That a poor creature, which hath but a heart to step aside, and give God a visit in any corner of his house, should find the arms of so great a majesty to embrace him, this is so stupendous, that we may better admire than express it. O! this pardoning mercy, and the love of Christ that procured it! they are the most precious and fruitful heads for a gracious soul to enlarge his sweetest meditations upon here on earth: but who can conceive, what ravishing musick glorified saints will make in running division on this sweet note. I am sure the song their harps are tuned unto, is the song of the Lamb. The saints finished happiness in heaven's glory, is a composition of all the rare ingredients possible, so tempered by the wise hand of God, that as none could well be spared, so not the taste of any one shall be lost in another; but this of pardoning mercy, and the stupendous love and wisdom of God thro' Christ therein, shall, as I may so say, give a sweet relish to all, and be tasted above all the rest. Take away peace, and that but of an inferior

ferior nature (outward peace) and the feast is spoil'd, altho' it be on a prince's table. If thou poor soul bee'st but come to thyself, so far as to groan under thy curfed hypocrisy, and direct these thy groans in a prayer to heaven for Christ's help, thou shalt have thy physician soon with thee, never fear it. "A wounded spirit" (saith Solomon) who can bear," yea, who can cure: if any could, surely then the devils were as able as any to do it. That Spirit which first indited the word, hath sealed it to the hearts of innumerable believers: indeed all the saints acknowledge their comfort and peace to be drawn out of these wells of salvation. No salvation, when the flood comes (meaning death) but Christ; yea, being in Christ, hanging on the outside of the ark by a specious profession will not save, Micah ii. 7. "Do not" my words do good to him that walketh up-
"rightly." And sure it is ill walking in that way, where there is no word from God to bid us good speed; where the word doth not bless, it curseth; where it promiseth not, it threatens. Thou mayst, poor creature, hide God by thy ignorance and atheism so that thou shalt not see him; but thou canst not, so as he shall not see thee. Indeed he that hath the word on his
side,

side, and a holy skill to use it, hath as much advantage of his adversary that comes with other armour (let him be never so good a fencer) as a man with a good sword, hath over him that comes forth only with a bulrush in his hand. All error dreads the light of the word, and fears more to be examined by that, than a thief does to be tried before a strict judge. He that is his own teacher (saith Bernard)* is sure to have a fool for his master; but the most wise, that makes the word of God the men of his council, Psal. xvii. 4. There is more riches and treasure to be had in one promise, than all the gold and silver the Indies are worth. "Exceeding great and precious promises;" by them a poor believer may lay claim to heaven and earth at once. Make sure of Christ, and he will make sure of thee; he will follow thee to thy sick bed, and lie in thy bosom, chearing thy heart with sweet comfort, when worldly joy lies cold upon thee. Think gold dirt, and it is so, for all the royal stamp on it: count the swelling titles of worldly honour vanity, and they are such; but have bare thoughts of Christ and he is not worse: flight heaven as much as you will, and it will be heaven still. Faith and repentance will be good doctrine to preach and
hear

hear to the end of the world. You may as well quarrel with God, because he hath made but one heaven, and one way to it, as be offended with the preacher for preaching these over and over. In heaven the saints draw all their wine of joy (as I may so say) at one tap, and shall to all eternity; and yet it never tastes flat. God is that one object their souls are filled with, and never weary of. Herod feared John, and did many things, but love is stronger than fear. His love to Herodias overcame his fear of John. If a saint could any way miscarry, and fall short of this eternal life, it must be from one of these three causes; first, because God may forsake the christian, and withdraw his grace and help from him: or, secondly, because a believer may forsake God: or lastly, because satan may pluck him out of the hands of God: a fourth I know not: now none of these can be. The water of the saint's failings cast on the fire of God's love, cannot quench it; whom he loves, he loves to the end. What satan lays on, God takes off; but who can ease if God lays on. Be not dismay'd at the report which the scripture makes of satan's power, let them fear him who fear not God: what are these mountains of power and pride before thee, O christian!

who

who servest a God that can make a worm thresh a mountain? the greatest hurt he can do thee, is by nourishing this false fear of him in thy bosom. Watchfulness is more needful for the christian soldier, than any other, because other soldiers fight with men that need sleep as well as themselves; but the christian's grand enemy satan is ever awake, and walking his rounds, seeking whom he may surprize. It is not the many notions we have, but the establishment we have in the truth, makes us strong christians. Let not the authority from man, but evidence from the word conclude thy judgment; that's but a shore, this a foundation.

From Sir ROBERT TITCHBOURNE.

WERE God but believed in what he says, all the temptations of satan, and the doubtings of our unbelieving hearts, would be silenced and brought to nothing: what exceeding folly is it in our hearts, that God who never deceived any that trusted on him, should be distrusted by any, and not believed by all; he is the God of truth, so is his word the word of truth; and not any soul that ever tried God by trusting him upon his word, but found him
H so.

so. Oh! then, take God's word, and our hearts will be quiet; though the heathens do rage, yet they imagine but a vain thing. In this glorious mystery, free grace in God is the fountain; full satisfaction to Divine Justice the way; but perfect salvation and redemption to all his elect body in Christ the end. And truly when a soul can say, my beloved is mine and I am his, he hath spoken all at once. I know no other light, nor rule, but the word and Spirit, to make out any thing of God to any soul: the glory of that day will be, God is mine, and I am his.

From Mr. CARYL's Exposition on Job.

THE earth, and all our concernments who live upon the face of it, hang upon nothing but upon the will of God. If he let us go we fall, though all the powers on earth would under prop and uphold us; and if he holds us up, we stand fast, though we have no more of any earthly power to prop us up with, than the earth hath, which is propt up with and hangeth upon nothing.

God manifesteth himself in heaven, as princes upon their thrones; so heaven is the throne
of

of God : and where God acts most, our affections should be most, and our conversation most ; where the throne is, thither the great resort is ; many flock to the court. As it will be our glory hereafter to be in heaven, or about the throne of God for ever in person, so it is our grace to be daily there in spirit while we are here. The earth is God's footstool, yet many make that their throne : heaven is God's throne, and many make that their footstool. They tread and trample upon the things of heaven, while they set their hearts upon the things of the earth. 'Tis a sad mistake, when men set their feet where they should set their hearts, and prophane the throne of God, not only by levelling it with, but by laying it lower than the ground.

In the world to come, all is day and light to the godly, to those who die in the Lord ; and all is night and darkness to the wicked, to those who die out of the Lord. Heaven and hell, a state of eternal blessedness or wretchedness, have no change in them, or any thing that is heterogeneous or of any other kind. Heaven which hath light and joy in it, hath no darkness, no sorrow at all in it. Hell which hath darkness and sorrow in it, hath no light

nor joy at all in it. The mixtures and change of light and darkness, of joy and sorrow, of pain and pleasure, are made here on earth. A zealous godly man's first waking thoughts, are with God and Christ, or about his own soul, how God may be honoured, and how his soul may be saved: so the wicked man when he awakes he is still with sin, and if he cannot awake naturally soon enough to sin, he will force himself to awake, and so may be said to awake to sin before he is awake.

Job xxii. 21. " Acquaint thyself with God, " and be at peace:" for there is an acquaintance with God from pure love: as when we come to a friend, having nothing to do but to see him, and to renew or strengthen our acquaintance with him: we do not come to load him with our cares, or advise with him about our business, or desire a courtesy of him, but merely and purely to shew our love to him. Thus to come to God when we are not press'd with fears, nor pinch'd with wants, nor clouded with doubts, nor vex'd with troubles, is the most noble and ingenuous way of acquainting ourselves with him. When we (as it were) make a journey to God, having nothing to do with him but to visit him, and to desire farther communion

communion with him ; nothing to do with him but to behold his excellency and his glory ; nothing to do with him, but to tell him what our hearts are towards him ; how we love him, how we depend upon him, how we desire to please him, and to commit our ways to him : to acquaint God with these things which only concern our holy walking with him, this is to seek pure acquaintance with him.

A godly man's chief care is to be accepted with God, and his thoughts are for God, and of God ; and were it not for this thought, that God is, or that there is a God, and he a holy God, a just God, a gracious God, he would not think himself (as we say) worth the ground he goes upon. A godly man is sometimes at a loss for God, and cannot tell where to find him ; they who fear the Lord much, may be without the feelings of his love ; and they who obey his holy commandments, without the comfort of his precious promises. It is a sad thing not to find God, but it is a far sadder to have no desires after him. The presence of God is sweet, precious, and delicious to saints at all times ; but then sweetest, when they find most bitterness in the world. It is the great care of a godly man, to know the word of God written

and delivered over to us, as the rule of our life and faith; for indeed therein we have our judgment, and our answer: such is the mystery of godliness, that the same Christ who hath done all for us, will also do all in us.

There are no sermons in hell, nor any salvation there; the loving kindness of God is abundantly declared on earth, but it shall not be declared in hell. There's tears enough and mourning enough in hell, but there is not the least godly sorrow in hell, which only worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.

The word of truth conveigheth strength to the weak, wisdom to the simple, comfort to the sorrowful, light to those who are in darkness, and life unto the dead.

There is no assurance to be had of the best things here below, but only this, that we cannot be sure of them.

While the Lord giveth and guardeth our outward peace, it is inviolable: and as to our spiritual peace, if the Lord speak it, who or what can trouble the soul. Satan can do much, and would do more (if his chain were lengthned, and he not restrained) to the trouble and molestation of our souls; there's not a godly man
living

living should rest an hour quiet for him, if he might have his wish or his will.

God is our best friend at all times, even in the best times ; and it is best to look on him in the worst times.

Night mercies deserve and call for day praises, especially two sort of night mercies ; first, night preservation ; secondly, refreshing us with sleep in the night.

God hath given his word to man, not to beasts ; he hath not made a Bible for the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of the air, but for man he hath, that he might both know his will and do it ; know his favour or good will to him, and enjoy it. He hath given some men his Spirit ; he hath not bestowed his Spirit upon any beasts, nor upon any fowls of the air. He hath given us his ordinances, and appointed offices, or set persons in office, to manage and hold out these ordinances, wherein himself is both honoured and enjoyed. God hath taught man much more than beasts : first, that all things which befall us, come from, and are ordered by himself : secondly, that we ought to receive the rule and take instructions from God, how to behave ourselves under his various dealings : thirdly, he hath taught us at all times,

and in all turns of providence, to stay ourselves in waiting upon him : fourthly, he hath taught us in times of trouble and affliction, to cry to him, and call upon him as children in faith, not barely to complain, much less to be impatiently outrageous like beasts.

Neither oppression from man, nor affliction from God can break the pride of man's spirit ; our estates may be broken, our relations broken, our comforts broken, yet our hearts remain unbroken. There is nothing in affliction, trouble, or oppression, that can trouble the heart of man ; the Spirit of God, God himself must do it.

As it is the happiness of the saints in heaven always to behold God, so it is the happiness of the saints here on earth that the Lord does always behold them, that his eye is never withdrawn from them. Consider, you that are in a righteous state, consider your privilege ; consider what it is to have the Lord Jesus always setting his eye upon you ; to have the Lord's pitying and compassionating eye always upon you ; to have the Lord's providing and caring eye always upon you ; to have the Lord's delighting and well pleased eye always upon you : to have the eyes of the Lord thus upon you, what can ye desire more.

We

We have bad memories for any thing that's good, especially for the good word, and the good works of God.

The Lord will have us to be his remembrancers, and though he is ever mindful of his covenant, yet he liketh it well to be put in mind of it. But O! what need we of a remembrancer to put us in mind of the work of God, and to magnify his works! We need daily a remembrancer to put us in mind of what we should do, how much more of what God hath done! We need to be minded of that which 'tis a wonder how we can forget, our latter end, or how frail we are; how much more do we need to be minded of those duties which fit us for our latter end, and lead us to those enjoyments which never end!

If God be great and we know him not, that is, not able to comprehend him; then we must rest satisfied with what God hath manifested of himself and of his will. God hath manifested himself these four ways; first, in his word: secondly, in his works of creation and providence: thirdly, in his son: and fourthly, by his Spirit.

Take heed of a bold pressing into the secrets of God, or of a curious prying into the nature
of

ot God, which indeed will but dazzle our eyes, and the more we think or look into it, the blinder we shall be.

As it is a man's comfort, his choicest comfort, that God hath provided an advocate for him, that he hath found out one to speak to himself, in our behalf, namely, Jesus Christ; so it is both the duty and honour of man, to be an advocate for God.

We may see who God is, in what he hath done; the rain and snow declare the power of God, thunder and lightning shew what he can do.

'Tis an everlasting spring of comfort, an encouragement unto the people of God, both in prayer and unto prayer; they pray to him who is mighty, mighty to do what they pray for. The Lord's promises are our richest inheritances; and that not only because he hath promised greater and better things than are in the compass of any man's power to make good, or in the compass of any man's understanding to comprehend; but, because he will certainly be as good in performance as he hath been in promise. For he is in one mind concerning all that he hath promised. He will be merciful as he hath promised, and pardon sin as he hath

hath promised, and sanctify all our troubles as he hath promised; he will give us his Spirit as he hath promised, and save us eternally as he hath promised.

We may find God, but we cannot find him out. God is to be found by every humble faithful seeker of him. 1. We cannot find him out, as to the infiniteness of his essence and being. 2. We cannot find him out, as to the excellency of his attributes, or the manner of his being: who can tell how wise God is, how holy, how just, how powerful, how good! We may easily find his divine perfections all the world over; we may find them in every leaf of the book of the scripture: yea, in every leaf of the book of the creature; but we cannot find them out any where to perfection. 3. We cannot find out the depths of his councils. 4. The Lord cannot be found out, no not in his works of providence. 5. We cannot find out God in the dispensations of his free grace in the gospel; there are such mazes, such mysteries of love, and goodness, and kindness in Christ Jesus, as we cannot find them out.

If the Lord do but say the word, what storm, what tempest, what wrath, what rage, what outrage

outrage soever there is in the earth, all's hush'd and still.

Natural quietness, much more civil, but above all, spiritual quietness, is of the Lord.

Heaven is a glass, wherein we may see what we ought to be now: 'tis such a glass as God has made for us to behold ourselves in, and above all to behold himself, his blessed self in. Let us dress ourselves by this glass every day. Let it not satisfy us to look upon the heavens, that we may see and be taken with their own beauty and excellency, as philosophers do in their discourses of heaven; but let us see God in them; let us see grace and glory in them. There is so little of God in the discourses of philosophers (saith one) that they are colder than the frost and snow of which they often discourse. But let us see God in this looking-glass of the heavens, and therein also let us see ourselves, and learn to be fitting and preparing ourselves for heavenly joys and enjoyments. We have never looked well upon or in this glass, till we have mended our dress, and are become better and more beautiful by looking into it.

As we want a keeper, so we have one, and he is a sure one, his care is not only without end, but without intermission.

Every

Every godly man prayeth, who doth but humbly, sincerely, and feelingly manifest his desires unto God in faith through Jesus Christ. There is no state so low, but a godly man may have a freedom with God in prayer. Prayer is the language and breath of the new creature, and therefore let him be what or where he can be, he will be praying.

Pain and sickness come not by chance, nor are we to stay in nature for the cause of their coming. Many in their afflictions mind not God, they seek to men, not to God: a cross without a Christ, never made any seek God.

It is a mercy to taste our meat, or to take the comfort of what we eat. It is sweet to taste meat and the goodness of the Lord together. Look, that ye provide somewhat to eat, that will go down upon a sick bed: your sick-bed meat is Christ, all other dainty food may be an abhorring to you. The word and prayer both sanctify and sweeten all creature enjoyments.

Tis the alpha and omega, the first and the last of all other favours, to find God favourable to us; if God be favourable to us, it matters not much who frowns upon us, or what foul weather we meet with in this world. There is no greater argument of spiritualness, than to honour

honour God in naturals. He is an holy man indeed that is holy in dealing about civil things; and he is a spiritual man indeed, that sees God in natural things.

Fervency in prayer is good, but perseverance is better.

It is said of the enemies of the people of God, they may do any thing against them but prevail.

We cannot always judge of a man's estate by his actions, or by his speeches; while the heart is right, words may go wrong.

We know prayer is the afflicted soul's first and last, that is, his best refuge, indeed all his refuge.

There are two things of admirable use in speaking; brevity and perspecuity. 'Tis no very hard thing in most matters, to join perspecuity with brevity, and to give a clear sense in a few words. Note, they who speak for God, may speak with courage and be bold; God is an everlasting argument, a subject that can never be finished. The works of creation and providence shew that God is, and what he is. We say some things are far fetcht, and dear bought; true knowledge, especially the knowledge of Jesus Christ deserves to be far fetch'd, and it cannot be too dear bought: we must
drive

drive a strange kind of trade with the truths of God, we must be always buying, and never selling, yet that's a commodity will never lay upon our hands.

God is the maker of every creature, the least worm, the least fly is of his making; yet Elihu speaks of it as his peculiar priviledge, "my Maker." God hath made others as well as thee, yet so remember him to be thy maker, as if he had made none but thee. That God is the maker of our cross, should make us quiet under it. All he can lose in this world, doth not, cannot make him miserable, who is made fit for the world to come. We neither understand the dealings nor sayings of God, if left to ourselves. Man is often cured of his spiritual deafness, both as to the voice of the word and works of God, by sickness. Prosperity (saith one of the ancients) is the gift of God comforting us; adversity is the gift of God admonishing us: why then dost thou complain that thou sufferest? thy suffering is a medicament, not a punishment, 'tis for thy bettering, not for thy undoing.

None teacheth so plainly and clearly as God. None teacheth like God, that is, so mildly, so moderately, so condescendingly to the condition

dition and capacity of those with whom he hath to do. 3. So patiently and meekly. 4. None teacheth like him, that is, so constantly and continually; he teacheth, and he is always teaching. 5. So truly, so unerringly. 6. So authoritatively. 7. So effectually, so efficaciously.

The thoughts of eternity should swallow up all our time; yet alas, how doth time, or the things which are but temporary, swallow up in most men the thoughts of eternity! Did we but spend two or three minutes of time every day in the serious remembrance of our eternal state, it would be an effectual means to make us both holy in and contented with whatever temporal state we meet with in the world. It is good for us in our health and best strength, to be looking into the pit, and considering upon what ground of comfort we can descend into the grave.

“ And he saw that the people were naked; ”
Exod. xxxii. 25. A godly man sinning, renders himself sometimes thus naked; but a wicked man is always thus naked, he hath not a rag of a promise to put upon him, and is therefore obnoxious to the incursions of every evil,

A godly man prays, not only because he hath need to pray, but because he loves to pray. He prayeth in sickness, and so he doth in health; he prayeth in poverty, and so he doth in riches; he seeks relief by prayer in bad times, and prayer is a refreshing to him in the best of times.

How many thousand, thousand, thousand thoughts do men loose; the thoughts of many years are lost in a moment! God never lost, nor never shall loose one thought. It is not the hold which we have of God, but that which he hath of us, that makes us hold on our way.

Tho' the devil goeth up and down, yet he is ever in chains; he is in a double chain, even when he goes and circuits the whole earth abroad: he is in a chain of justice, and in a chain of providence. He is in a chain of justice; that is, under the wrath of God; and he is in a chain of providence, that is, under the eye of God. If satan and wicked men cannot move till Christ saith go, nor wound till Christ saith strike, nor spoil nor kill till Christ saith their estates, their lives are in your power; surely Christ will not speak a word to their hurt whom he loves, nor will he ever suffer his enemies to do a real damage to his friends: besides it may fill a soul with unspeakable joy, to

I

remember

remember that while a man is suffering, the will of Christ is a doing.

All the wonders and excellencies, all the glory and goodness that is in creatures, is but a foot step, a print, or drop of that excellency and glory and power, that is in God; therefore every thing that is most excellent, is ascribed unto God.

Life is a new gift every hour of time we live on the earth, and glory will be a new gift every minute of eternity we shall live in heaven. The life of man is nothing else but a coming and returning; there is nothing said of staying and abiding: it is but a flood and an ebb, and then we are carried into the ocean of eternity.

When God says, "I will be with you," you may make what you will out of it; sit down and imagine with yourselves whatsoever good you can desire, and it is all comprehended in this one word. To be angry and discontent at God's judgments, is more destructive to us, than the judgments themselves. They who have tasted how gracious the Lord is in his promises, will rejoice in his commandments; and it is as much their desire to serve him, as it is their happiness to be saved by him. There is never a providence of God but hath either

a mercy or a wonder in it. Jehovah the living God has taught us to say, "Who is a God like "unto thee," and our own experience has sealed it.

He that hath not faith, hath nothing to get a mercy with; and he that hath not a broken heart, hath nothing to put a mercy in.

There are two things which God will not bare in his; when they grow wanton with a mercy, and when they complain without a cross.

The Lord is with many of his people when they are not with him; that is, when they do not find him, or are not sensible of his presence. God is with his people, even when they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet they are not always with God.

A godly man hath earnest and longing desires after God; whatsoever or whomsoever he finds, he thinks he hath found nothing, or no body, till he finds God. How doth David, Psal. xlii. 1, 2. shew his unsatisfiedness till he found God. Nothing but God was in his mouth, nothing in his desire. God alone is enough, all without God is nothing to a godly man.

Satan and the world are word stealers; and they steal away the word, not because they

desire to make any use of it, but lest we should. A good man (as one of the antients speaketh) makes his heart God's library, there he layeth up whole volumes of holy precepts, and of precious promises.

Affliction to the children of God at present, are but corrections. A godly man cannot be unhappy while he enjoys God. We are apt to conceive chastenings to be of no use, when they are as necessary as our daily bread: the Lord sends afflictions to fashion and cleanse our hearts, as fit vessels to hold an exceeding weight of glory.

From Mr. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD'S
Letters.

SINCE he looked upon me, my heart is not my own, he hath run away to heaven with it. But let me be a sinner, and worse than the chief of sinners, yea, a guilty devil, I am sure my well beloved is God; and when I say Christ is God, and my Christ is God, I have said all things, I can say no more: I would I could build as much on this, my Christ is God, as it would bear, I might lay all the world upon it. O Lord God, what is so needful as
this,

this, falvation ! falvation ! It is good there is a heaven, and it is not a night-dream, or a fancy : you have learned of Christ that there is a heaven ; contend for it, and contend for Christ.

I fear I adore his comforts more than himself ; and that I love the apple of life, better than the tree of life.

O ! how sweet a thing were it for us to learn to make our burdens light, by framing our hearts to the burden, and making our Lord's will a law !

Happy are they who take up God, wrath, justice, and sin, as they are in themselves. And if there had not been such a thing as the grace of Jesus, I should have long since given up with heaven, and with the expectations to see God : but grace, grace, free grace, the merits of Christ for nothing, white and fair, and large Saviour-mercy (which is another sort of thing than creature-mercy, or law-mercy ; yea, a thousand degrees above angel-mercy) hath been and must be the rock that we drowned souls must swim to.

Sanctification, and mortification of our lusts, are the hardest parts of christianity.

Many now would go to heaven the land-way, (for they love not to be sea-sick.) It is true,

many are striking a plainer way to heaven, but my soul for theirs if they find it.

O what owe I to the file, to the hammer, to the furnace of the Lord Jesus ! grace tried is better than grace, it is glory in its infancy.

Many now take Christ by guess : be sure that it be he, and only he, whom ye have meet with ; his sweet smell, his lovely working in the soul, will not lye. Christ and his cross are not separable in this life ; howbeit Christ and his cross part at heaven's door, for there is no house-room for crosses in heaven ; one tear, one sigh, one sad-heart, one fear, one loss, or thought of trouble, cannot find lodging there.

Since I came to Aberdeen, I have been taken up to see the new-land, the fair palace of the Lamb : and will Christ let me see heaven to break my heart, and never give it to me ?

O ! how heavenly a thing is it, to be dead, dumb, and deaf, to this world's sweet music ! the devil and the world, they cannot wound the love of Christ.

I have benefited by riding a long journey, in giving that time to prayer, by praying for others ; for by making an errand to God for them, I have gotten something for myself. Christ keepeth the keys of Christ (to speak so)
and

and of his own love, and he is a wiser distributor than I can take up: I know, there is more in him than would make me run over like a coast-full sea.

If I had not failed this sea-way to heaven, but had taken the land-way, as many do, I should not have known Christ's sweetness in such a measure: but the truth is, let no man thank me for I caused not Christ's wind to blow upon me: a heart of iron, and iron doors, will not hold Christ out. O! how sweet and dear are those thoughts that are still upon the things which are above! and how happy are they who are longing to have little sand in their glass, and to have time's thread cut, and can cry to Christ, Lord Jesus, have over, come and fetch the dreary passenger? I wish our thoughts were more frequently than they are upon our country.

O! but heaven casteth a sweet smell afar off, to those who have spiritual smelling! God hath made many fair flowers, but the fairest of them all is heaven, and the flower of all flowers is Christ. Every good thing except God, wanteth a bottom, and cannot stand alone, how then can it bear the weight of us? Our best things here have a worm in them; our

joys besides God, in the inner half, are but woes and sorrows : Christ, Christ is that, which our love and desires can sleep sweetly and rest safely upon.

There be many things to do before our harvest come, and we take ill with it, and can hardly endure to set our paper face to one of Christ's storms, and to go to heaven with wet feet, and pain, and sorrow. We love to carry heaven with us, and would have two summers in one year, and no less than two heavens ; but this will not be for us : one, and such an one may suffice us well enough ; the man Christ got but one only, and shall we have two ?

Come in, come in to Christ, and see what ye want, and find it in him : he is the short cut (as we use to say) and the nearest way to an outgate of all our burdens.

One thing I can say, by on-waiting ye will grow a great man with the lord of the house : hang on, 'till ye get some good from Christ ; lay all your loads and your weights by faith upon Christ ; ease yourself, and let him bare all : he can, he does, he will bare you, howbeit hell were upon your back.

Rejoice that he is come, and hath chosen you in the furnace ; it was even there where ye
and

and he set tryft: (appoint or meet) that's an old gate of Chrift's, he keepeth the good old fashion with you, that was in Hofea's days. Hofea ii. 14.

If ye love but Chrift's fun-tide, and would have only summer weather, and a land-gate not a sea-way to heaven; your profeſſion will play you a flip, and the winter-well will go dry again in ſummer. But I have caſten this work upon Chrift to get me himſelf; I have his faith, and truth, and promiſe (as a pawn of his) all engaged that I ſhall obtain that which my hungry deſires would be at, and I eſteem that the choice of my happineſs. O! bleſſed ſoul, that could ſacrifice his will and go to heaven; having loſt his will, and made reſignation of it to Chrift! Long-ſuffering in God, is God himſelf; and that is our ſalvation, and the ſtability of our heaven is in God: he knew (who ſaid) "Chrift in you the hope of glory," Col. i. 17. for our hope and the bottom and pillar of it is Chrift.

Sinners are anchor faſt and made ſtable in God; ſo that if God do not change (which is impoſſible) then my hope ſhall not fluctuate. O! ſweet ſtability of ſure bottom'd ſalvation! Who could win heaven if this were not? and
who

who could be saved, if God were not, and if he were not such a God as he is? O God be thanked, that our salvation is coasted and landed and shored upon Christ, who is master of winds and storms!

Lay no more on the creatures, than they are able to carry; lay your soul and your weights upon God; make him your only, only best beloved. I know not what ye have, if ye want Christ: learn daily both to possess and miss Christ, in his secret bridegroom-smiles; he must go and come, because his infinite wisdom thinketh it best for you: we will be together one day; we shall not need to borrow light from sun, moon, or candle; there shall be no complaints on either side in heaven; there shall be none there, but he, and we, the bridegroom and the bride: devils, temptations, trials, desertions, losses, sad-hearts, pain and death shall be all out of play, and the devil must give up his office of tempting. O! blessed is the soul, whose hope hath a face looking straight out to that day! "Ho ye that have no money, come and buy," Isai. lv. 1. that is the poor-man's market.

If I come to heaven any way, howbeit, like a tired traveller, upon my guide's shoulder, it is

is good enough for those who have no legs of their own for such a journey.

I see nothing in this life but sin, and the four fruits of sin : and O what a burden is sin !

There is a great necessity of heaven ; ye must have it : all other things, as houses, lands, children, husbands, friends, country, credit, health, wealth, honour, may be wanted ; but heaven is your one thing necessary, the good part that shall not be taken from you. See that ye buy the field where the pearl is ; sell all and make a purchase of salvation : think it not easy, for it is a steep ascent to eternal glory.

I pay tribute to none for heaven, seeing my land and heritage holdeth of Christ, my new King : infinite wisdom hath devised this excellent way of freeholding for sinners ; it is a better way to heaven than the old way that was in Adam's days ; it hath this fair advantage, that no man's emptiness and want layeth an inhibition upon Christ, or hindereth his salvation. Well were my soul if Christ were the element, mine own element, and that I loved and breathed in him, and if I could not live without him. O ! that he would give me more than paper-grace or tongue-grace ! And if it were for no more, we have need of a Saviour to pardon the
very

very faults, and diseases, and weaknesſes of the new man, and to take away (to ſay ſo) our godly ſins, or the ſins of our ſanctification, and the dross or ſcum of ſpiritual love.

If Chriſt were as I am, that time could work upon him to alter him, or that the morrow could be a new day to him, or bring a new mind upon him, as it is to me a new day, I could not keep a houſe or a covenant with him: but I find Chriſt to be Chriſt, and that he is far, far, even infinite heaven's height above man; and that is all our happineſs.

Sinners can do nothing but make wounds that Chriſt may heal them; and make debts that he may pay them; and make falls that he may raiſe them.

Look beyond time; things here are but moon-ſhine: there is nothing will make you a chriſtian indeed, but a taſte of the ſweetneſs of Chriſt; come and ſee, will ſpeak beſt to your ſoul.

When he bloweth a kiſs aſar off to his poor heart-broken mourners in Zion, and ſendeth me but his hearty commendations, 'till we meet, I am confounded with wonder, to think what it ſhall be, when the faireſt among the ſons of men, ſhall lay a king's ſweet cheek to the ſin-
ful

ful cheeks of poor sinners. O! time, time, go swiftly, and hasten that day!

I have seen my abominable vileness; if I were well known, there would none in this kingdom ask how I do.

Free grace that we give no hire for, is a jewel our Lord giveth to few. Sanctification shall settle you most in the truth.

Wants are my best riches, because I have these supplied by Christ.

I find it hard work to believe, when the course of providence goeth crossways to our faith, and when misted souls in a dark night cannot know east by west, and our sea-compass seemeth to fail us. Thank your God, who saith, "I have "the keys of hell and death," I kill and make alive, the Lord bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. If satan were jaylor, and had the keys of death and of the grave, they should be stored with more prisoners.

Suffer we must; ere we were born, God decreed it, and it is easier to complain of his decree, than to change it.

Whether God come to his children with a rod or a crown, if he come himself with it, it is well; welcome, welcome Jesus, what way soever thou come, if we can get a sight of thee.

And

And sure I am, it is better to be sick, providing Christ come to the bed-side, and draw by the curtains, and say courage, "I am thy salvation," than to enjoy health being lusty and strong, and never to be visited of God.

If ye would have present comfort under the cross, be much in prayer; for at that time your faith kisseth Christ, and he kisseth the soul.

If twenty crosses be written for you in God's book, they will come to nineteen, and then to one, and after that none, but your head in Christ's bosom for evermore, and his own soft hand to dry your face and wipe away your tears. Losses for Christ, are but our goods given out in bank in Christ's hands. In the midst of worldly employment, there should be some thoughts of sin, judgment, death and eternity, with a word or two of ejaculatory prayer at least to God. To beware of wandering of heart in seeking God in prayer. Not to grudge, howbeit you come from prayer without sense or joy. Down casting sense of guiltiness and hunger is often best for us. There are many heads laying in Christ's bosom, but there is room for yours among the rest; and therefore go on, and let hope go before you; sin not in your trials, and the victory is yours; pray, wrestle,

wrestle, and believe, and ye shall overcome and prevail with God as Jacob did.

What you do amiss in your life to day, you may amend it to morrow ; for as many suns as God makes to rise upon us, you have as many new lives, but you can die but once ; or if you mar or spoil that business, ye cannot come back to mend that piece of business again. Be not afraid when ye come to the black and swelling river of death, to put in your foot and wade after him, the current how strong soever cannot carry you down the water to hell ; the Son of God, his death and resurrection are stopping stones, and a stay to you ; set down your feet by faith on these stones, and go through as on dry land.

The thorn is one of the most angry and crabbed weed that the earth yieldeth, and yet out of it springeth the rose, one of the sweetest smelling flowers, and most delightful to the eye that the earth hath ; your Lord shall make joy and gladness out of your afflictions, for all his roses have a fragrant smell.

Mr. Rutherford was lovely in death, which corresponded with his former life, some of his dying words are these : “ I shall shine, I shall
“ see him as he is, and all the fair company
“ with

“ with him, and shall have my large share,
“ It is no easy thing to be a christian, but as
“ for me I have got the victory, and Christ is
“ holding forth his arms to embrace me. I
“ have had my faintings and fears as another
“ sinful man, to be carried through creditably;
“ but as sure as ever he spoke to me in his
“ word, his Spirit witnessed to my heart, say-
“ ing, fear not, he had accepted my suffering
“ and the outgate should not be matter of
“ prayer but of praise. Thy word was found
“ and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy
“ and rejoicing of my heart. Now I feel, I
“ believe, I enjoy, I rejoice; I feed on manna,
“ I have angels food, my eyes shall see my
“ Redeemer. I know that he shall stand at the
“ latter day on the earth, and I shall be caught
“ up in the clouds to meet him in the air.
“ I sleep in Christ, and when I awake I shall
“ be satisfied with his likeness. O! for arms
“ to imbrace him! I disclaim all; the port I
“ would be in at is redemption, and forgive-
“ nefs of sins thro’ his blood: glory, glory
“ dwelleth in Immanuel’s land.

From

From Mr. FLEMING's Fulfilling of
Scripture.

O What an excellent interpreter is experience! "Taste and see," for thus the serious christian getteth a view of the scripture and spiritual things, which the most subtil and piercing eye of un sanctified schoolmen cannot reach; yea, by the practice of truth, nearness to God and retiring of the soul to him, hath often got more light in an hour, than others by many days putting their judgment and invention upon the rack.

This is God's own seal, the accomplishment of scripture which he putteth to the word to confirm and ratify the same; and all that the christian is worth, which is laid up in the promise, were then perished, if the scripture should want an accomplishment, the godly man hath then run and laboured in vain.

Indeed those who are solidly persuaded anent the truth, and its certain out-making, may have much joy and peace, whilst they know the ground of their confidence can bear up any stress or burden they lay upon it; and for what end did the Lord witness the certainty of his word

by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for him to lie, but that from so sure and strong a ground, his people might have strong consolation. It is true this blessed record doth bare witness to itself, and is known by its own light, whereon there is such a visible impress of the glorious God, such convincing marks of its true descent, as may thoroughly shew whose it is, and how far it exceeds all human invention; and thus by a clear manifestation of the truth, doth commend itself to men's consciences as a safe ground whereon they may repose their soul. They may well trust God in a strait, who have so strong an argument to make use of, that oft they have tried him, and the truth of his word, by many, many experiences: I would add, the concernment and weight of this study may press it on us; for if the scripture's accomplishment be an undoubted truth, O! then this is sure; the saints have a great inheritance, they are princes, though now under a disguise. O! then, there is a heaven and an hell, that is certain; eternity is not a night-dream, and one moment shall shortly put an end to all our services; yea, the shutting of our eye-lids at death, shall but open them in the paradise of God.

That

That the scripture of God contained in the Old and New Testament, wherein our great hope and comfort doth lay, is certainly true, and hath a real accomplishment, may be thus demonstrated : that it is tried and proved in the godly man's experience, to which in all ages, yea, from innumerable proofs the saints have put to their seal, that this is a sure and faithful testimony.

That there is surely another party than the world, or themselves, with which they have to do, an invisible adversary without, whom they perceive by that sensible correspondence he keepeth with their heart within. That he is one who is overcome by resistance, and doth flee before those that withstand him, which they have often proved ; that they have returned from prayer with the spoil of their adversary, and at such a time have been made to wonder, how that which often foyled them, should have been their temptation ?

This helpeth to make the mercies of the godly man to have a peculiar and sweet relish, and to be some way twice his mercy, when he gets them in so immediate a way reached to him as it were out of the promise, and as an observable return from heaven : when thus the Lord

sealeth his word to him by his work, and the way of the word he findeth hath been the way of his comfortable outgage; that when he hath had no other escape, but to turn into the promise, and to cast himself upon it, he gained this experience; he trusted in God and was helped, and can give in this testimony of him, that he hath both spoken it, and himself also hath done it, according to his word. Whereby we may see the performance of the promise in christian experience, is this, that God truly heareth prayer: no man ever was in earnest in the matter of religion, and a stranger to this; yea, that he was never more certainly persuaded of any thing, than of this, that God doth hear prayer. O! if men's souls were but in their souls stead, whose evening wrestlings and tears, the Lord hath often turned into a morning song, they should know this is no delusion.

That prayer with quiet on-waiting in the use of means, winneth comfortably through; where over-caring and carnal policy in the use of all other shifts, hath been forced to stick.

This is surely found that God is the best friend, and when there is peace with him, things without do not offend; but they shall then understand, what it is to be in league with
the

the beasts of the field, and stones of the ground, having a sweet agreement with all the providences and dispensations that come in their way. Wearing out of prayer, and of delight therein, will quickly make them disrelish any other piece of religion, put them out of frame to meditate, or to give thanks: that wearing out of this is a strong temptation to a farther forbearance, and will sensibly wear them out of any sense of their need thereof, and make them strangers to themselves and to their own ease; so that they shall find, the less they are in this exercise, the farther they shall be indisposed, and the fewer errands they have the less felt necessity of the same.

If there be a God, or a truth in any religion, is it not with this blessed record of the scripture you must close as the alone rule thereof? O! can you be thus undetermined about so great an interest? you seem to be hesitant and unsure if there be any other world, a heaven or a hell; but Oh! are you sure there are not? and how then can you be secured from such a fear, which of all fears is the greatest? What a horrid and uncomfortable thing is it to be an atheist, which gives men no hope beyond the present life? yea, what a world would this be

to dwell in, if there were no true godliness in it? I shall only add, is it not rare to find a professed atheist at death, when once the approach of another world does awake the sense of a deity?

Doth not this argument of experience by a very clear demonstration witness that great truth of a godhead, whereon the whole superstructure of truth and godliness doth stand?

It is not the contemplation of nature in its highest flight, can answer such an assault of the devil, which may tryft the most established christian anent the being of God; but there is a demonstration within which goes farther than the judgment, and passeth natural understanding; whence we feel, we taste, we enjoy; yea, his voice is heard in the soul, which we surely know to be his, and this is the reach and import of this argument.

I would here offer some things which do witness a special advantage the godly man is at thereby to believe, and to be more thoroughly persuaded of the glorious being of God.

I. That he finds the believing of this is a very great thing, and not so easy to reach as the world do suppose, for it is no small matter even to attain this: Oh! what ordinary thoughts
have

have many about it, who think it is easy to pass an assent to this marvellous truth, because they never considered the greatness thereof; but it is sure, the more serious and grave a christian is, it will give him the more work, and we may find these usually are more plunged and exercised about this, than others.

They are at a special advantage to whom believing of this truth (O! blessed truth, that God is) is their exceeding joy; and amidst their heaviness can say, the thought and meditation of him is sweet; that when through a variety of temptations they are ready to faint, this restoreth their soul; yea, will cause it to leap for joy; and is their enough when other encouragements are farthest off, that God lives? O! what a sad thing is it in such a world, and in some deep perplexing plunge, to know the Lord is God, whom he hath now for a rock and a shield, and in the close of time, for his exceeding great reward. I shall but add, it is a very great thing these know, who know assuredly the real presence of God here, for thus they are made sure that he is, as one may know the sun, because of its warming heat, and when they see it with its own light; thus they are confirmed of the truth of the scripture,

whilst they see and feel one of the most marvellous things therein verified.

This is an argument that does clearly witness a truth and reality in prayer, which may be called one of the greatest wonders of religion, that such a way is, wherein there is so immediate an address to the majesty of God in all our concerns: is not this a very great thing, that poor man now upon earth, hath such a passage to heaven? and may speak up to him who inhabits eternity, the glorious object of the adoration of angels, without the intervening of any creature.

It may seem strange, how easily we can step out of the world, and the noise thereof, in before the Lord, without the least pause or time intervening, which the impression of so great a business should require; yea, so immediately in our return, again step into the world, as if we had wholly forgot where we had been. Should we look on prayer as a duty, and not consider it as a singular enjoyment also? without which, this earth would have a near appearance of hell, if we could not thus solace the soul in God, and get a vent under its greatest pressures: O! prayer, what thoughts should we have of it, if the truth thereof were more believed; I think that

that man who is sure of the being and faithfulness of God, and of the reality of prayer, needs not be solicitous with what face the world look on him, when thus his great interest and encouragement is secure, and a well is at his hand that can answer all complaints.

He is the Lord and with him there is no unrighteousness; it is sure the condition of the damned in hell takes not off that obligation to declare his faithfulness, and adore his unspotted justice; but O! then, it would cease to be hell, if such a blessed frame could have a being there. A man in Queen Mary's time said, he could not burn for the truth, and therefore forsook it, but by an unseen hand, had both himself and his house in one night burnt.

O! blessed and comfortable time in which the saints shall then fully know what heaven is, which they have so oft admired at a distance, to behold his face in whose presence is fulness of joy; and shall need no farther confirmation of the truth of the word, when once this great promise of the Lord's return is verified. O! when we open the Bible, and read the great promises thereof, ~~should we not have that~~ impression on our souls? these are the true and faithful sayings of God and his word, with whom

whom the doing thereof is as easy as to say it.

It was a notable saying of a grave minister of Christ, when he was upon the sea in a storm, O! shall I fear, says he, the face of a tyrant, that serve him who can restrain and tame the rage of this swelling sea.

Mr. Robert Bruce, whilst he was in the ministry at Edinburgh, shined as a great light through the whole land; the power and efficacy of his spirit most sensibly accompanying the word he preached, yea, it was known what an awful impression King James had of him, and did once give him that testimony before many, that he judged Mr. Bruce was worthy of the half of his kingdom. He was a man that had much inward exercise about his own personal case, had been oft assaulted anent that great foundation of truth, if there was a God, which cost him many days and nights wrestling, and when he hath come up to the pulpit, after being somewhat silent, which was his usual way, he would have said, "I think it is a great matter
"to believe there is a God," telling the people, it was another thing to believe that than they judged. But it was also known by his friends with whom he was familiar, what extraordinary
con-

confirmation he had from the Lord therein, what near familiarity he did attain in his secret converse with God : none needs fear to venture his interests through time on the word ; it is a small matter how this world doth reel and stagger, that is enough, the promise of the word shall certainly take place, and the expectation of the saints shall not make them ashamed.

The christian hath this to say, in behalf of the truth, " Persecuted, but not forsaken ; " cast down, yet not destroyed." You may see the apostle paying such a debt on this account, " Having nothing, yet possessing all " things."

From Mr. THOMAS WATSON'S Divine
Cordial.

FROM the thorn of sin, saints have gathered the grape of humility. In a strict sense we cannot give glory to God, but in an evangelical sense we may. Thou wilt love thy prince if he saves thy life, and wilt thou not love God who gives thee life ; if we love God we have all winds blowing for us ; these things which work against them shall work for good ;
the

the cross shall make way for a crown, every wind shall blow them to the heavenly port.

In the method God useth in calling sinners, he doth not tie himself to a way, or use the same order with all, he comes sometimes with the still voice. Such as have godly parents and have set under the warm sun-shine of religious education, know not many times how nor when they were called; the Lord did secretly and gradually instill grace into their hearts; as the dew falls insensibly in drops; they know by the heavenly effects that they are called, but the time or manner they know not; the finger moves on the dial, but we are not sensible when it moves; thus God deals with some.

This word, "Thy God," is the sweetest word in the Bible, it implies the best relations. There is never a providence of God, but hath either a mercy or a wonder in it.

We desert God, when we leave the guidance and conduct of his word. The favour of God is the best jewel; it sweetens a prison, and unstings death. When God is gone, what have we more? It is not the harp and viol can comfort, when God is gone. The deserted soul sends up whole vollics of sighs and groans, it knocks at heaven's gate by prayer, it can have

no rest 'till the golden beams of God's face
shine.

It argues more grace to grieve for the sins of
others than for our own; we may grieve for
our own sins, out of fear of hell, but to grieve
for the sins of others, is from a principle of love
to God.

No man did ever come off a looser by his ac-
quaintance with God.

When Eudoxia the empress threatned to
banish Chrysostom, tell her (saith he) I fear
nothing but sin.

The lines of scripture are richer than the
mines of gold.

How doth a gracious heart prize that day,
which was made on purpose to enjoy God in.

To love God is a better sign of sincerity, than
to fear him. If you love God, he can give
you peace when nothing else can, he can turn
the shadow of death into the morning, Amos
v 8. He can drop in Christ's blood, which is
a cooling julip; he can whisper his love by the
Spirit, and with one smile scatter all your fears
and disquiets. God is better than the soul,
better than angels, better than heaven.

It should be our care not only to have Christ
with us, but in us. This will be a cordial
when

when we are dying ; what though death be in our body, if Christ be in our heart.

From Mr. GAMMON's Christ a Christian's Life.

IT is best tarrying tho' night when Christ is present : when outward comforts go down, and Christ arises, it is a blessed change. It is a blessed lodging where Christ is ; well may a soul sleep quiet, when Christ is present with him.

Mr. BUNYAN.

WHAT a good night's lodging had Jacob, when he fled from the face of his brother Esau ; when the earth was his couch, the stone his pillow, the heavens his canopy, and the shades of the night his curtains.

Mr. ERSKINE.

WISDOM shines every moment in the work of creation, it glitters every day in the work of providence ; but all the treasures of wisdom are hid in Christ.

Speaking of Christ's little remnant, he calls them the very apple of his eye, the most tender

der part of the body, and the eye-lid of his special providence doth cover them ; yea, such is the value he has for them, that he calls them himself, and speaks of them as if he and they were but one ; Saul, Saul, (says the Lord) why persecutest thou me ?

If we are not lost in our thoughts of God, our thoughts of God are lost. When we think on the creature, we easily enlarge our thoughts so as to see an end of their perfection, but when we think of God, we can never know him to perfection : Psal. cxi. 96. Here our knowledge must end in admiration, and our love in extasy ; nay, we must conceive of God, as above all words, above all knowledge, and above all admiration, above all love, and above all extasy ! But let us go to scripture ; God knows best how to speak of himself, and we may safely acquiesce in scripture expressions, Neh. ix. 5. We are to conceive of God in Christ : Christ must be eyed in our addresses and acts of worship.

Try your faith, if it be from heaven it will meet with opposition from hell : the devil may let you peaceably go about duty, read, and pray, and communicate, because you may do these things carnally and formally, and go to hell

hell when all is done : but if once you begin to come to Christ, or to go about any duty believingly, then you are on the way to heaven, and if the devil can, he will draw you back, and throw you down with discouragements, and tear you with temptations, either as you are coming, or after you are come.

But it is always the best faith that is most opposed by the devil.

It is a hard thing to keep business out of our thoughts when we pray, and make it stay till our prayer is ended.

One smile of God's countenance is worth all your pains, tho' you were at a hundred times more.

Mr. RAWORTH.

THE Lord often writes angry epistles to his children, yet observe, still at the bottom of the letter, he subscribes "your loving Father."

God hath the four keys ; of the clouds, the womb, the heart, and of death, hanging only at his own girdle.

St.

St. CHRYSOSTOM'S Explanation of Rom.

v. 17.

“ **H**OW much more shall they, who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one Christ Jesus !”

The apostle says, not grace, but abundance of grace. For we receive not barely what may suffice to obtain our pardon, but incomparably more. We are delivered from all punishment, and from every evil. We are justified; we are sanctified; made the children of God, and the brethren of his only begotten Son. We are constituted heirs, joint heirs with the Prince of heaven: yea, we become the members of his body, most intimately and indissolubly united to that divine head.

All these privileges St. Paul styles the abundance of grace, intimating, that the antidote is not only qualified to counter-act and expel the poison; but is sovereign also to establish health, to create beauty, to impart honour, and from the most malignant of all evil, to produce the most distinguished blessings. Any one of which separately considered, would have been sufficient

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to

to overcome and disarm death : but under their combined influence, it is absolutely destroyed, it vanishes entirely away, and leaves not so much as a trace of mischief, or a shadow of terror.

Let us suppose some poor debtor, owing a considerable sum, and for want of payment cast into prison ; a generous friend pitying his condition, discharges the whole debt, and releases him from confinement. And not this only, but bestows upon him splendid apparel, with thousands of silver and gold ; introduces him to court, and recommends him to the royal favour ; procures his advancement to the highest honours, and puts him in possession of the grandest preferments. Where now is the disgrace of his imprisonment, and where are the distresses of his insolvent state ?

Such is the case with regard to us sinners,
and our most gracious Redeemer. He has paid inconceivably more than we either did or could possibly owe. Being God, the true God, the infinite and eternal God, his payment exceeds our debt, as much as the waters of the great deep exceed the small drop of a bucket.—
Doubt not therefore, poor sinner, that flee for refuge to this all glorious Saviour ; doubt not,
but

but thy fins, though more virulent than all plagues, are done away ; and death, though he be the king of terrors, is abolished ; this abolished, and those done away, before such an ocean of grace and merit, even as a spark of fire is extinguished, when plunged into the abysses of the sea.

From Mr. CAPEL on Temptations.

I MUST say that sin is a privation, an obliquity, no effect but a defect, and therefore we are not to trouble ourselves to inquire after any proper and efficient cause. God cannot be a deficient cause, because there can be no defect in him, and therefore the defect must be in the angel, and we must rest in the will of the angel.

I am persuaded that many men do discourage themselves over and above by reason of the too much fear they have of satan. I would we would fear God more, and satan less ; and then the devil and we should be less acquainted ; we yield often out of a base fear.

Many dispute it, how to find out the point of difference betwixt temptations that are ours, and such as are wholly diabolical : I think he

doth best, who doth study how to resist them, rather than to difference them. That there is a difference I know, but where the invifible point of the difference doth stand, that I know not.

Who are subject to be tempted? no man is free; the best men are often tempted, and that when they are at the best: the godly have in them the riches of the Spirit, gold and silver, and makes the devil to carry an evil eye to them; he is even sick to ruin such christians.

A common thing it is for a man out of passion (not compassion) to let it fly at anothers sins to-day, and to fall, or be ready to fall into the same sin to-morrow. Keep all our armour about us, and put sin and satan out of hope. Temptation is a spiritual thing, reason a natural weapon. And as our reason is carnal, it is a sweet friend to satan, and takes part with him against us. A man is never overcome in and by the temptation, as long as one can pray against it.

Three things to be prayed for; 1. Strength.
2. Wisdom. 3. Long-suffering.

The Lord God is too wise for satan. The word used aright sets him a going: it hath to back it, the almighty power of God, and satan cannot

cannot stand before this breath of the Lord's nostrils: we deceive ourselves if we think that reason is of any force; beware then of going that way to work; we have a better course, and that is to run to the word; the word will do it; "it is written" will pack him away. And in all our phyfic, be sure to put the blood of Christ.

Atheism. A man hath on his side the works of nature, the law and fire of his conscience; but when all is done, that which must and only will hold us against the temptation when it is strongly put by satan, is to fly to the word of God: the word saith, that there is a God, and therefore I will believe that there is a God: when once we are set upon by some fierce temptation, I would all christians to do these things; the first is, not to enter into dispute with his own reason: 2d. Then cleave to the word and say, though my reason cannot tell what to make of it, though lust in me say there is no God at all, though satan say that there is no God, and most do live as though there were no God; yet because it is in the word, the scripture saith it, I must and will and do believe it: we must see both God and heaven and all in the word. The best way is to begin and end

with the word, and to know that such a principle as is the essence and existence of God, ought not to be so much as questioned.

God in Christ hath all plaisters and pardons ready made and sealed. Our foundation is God's election; the Lord knows who are his; and though like children we know not him many times to be our father, yet he ever knows us to be his children.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, so the text saith, but it saith not without assurance.

What if we cannot pray as we should and would? yet desire to pray is prayer; prayer being the desire of the soul. The tongue of a man benumbed in a palsy, during the fit, is of no use, but the soul within is never benumbed; there is spiritual heat and blood in the soul, as long as there is life: as long as there is groaning, and but groaning, there is prayer: where groaning is we doubt of death, but as long as there is groaning we know there is life, and sometimes this groaning is the most spiritual kind of praying.

Satan doth turn and wind every stone, and all to frighten us and discourage us from prayer: he knows that a prayer is one of the best circles

cles to help us against all the fiends of hell, and that his kingdom cannot stand against one prayer of one saint: whatever satan hath been plotting ever since he made himself a devil, a poor christian with one only petition is able to undo; and therefore it is the best of his policy, to dishearten us by all means from prayer.

From Mr. THOMAS BOSTON's Four-fold State.

SAVING illumination carries the soul beyond opinion, to the certain knowledge of Christ and his excellency.

The light of grace is an overcoming light, determining men to assent to divine truths on the mere testimony of God. It is no easy thing for the mind of man to acquiesce in divine revelation.

We have Solomon's receipt for an ill-memory, Prov. iii. 1. "My son, saith he, forget not my law." But how shall it be kept in mind? "Let thine heart keep my commandments." Grace makes a heart-memory, even where there is no good head-memory, Psal. cxix. 11. The heart truly touched with the powerful sweetness of truth, will help the memory to retain what

is so relished. The word of God laid up in a sanctified memory, serves a man to resist temptations, puts the sword in his hand against his spiritual enemies.

It is observed by some, that the word Abba, is the same, whether you read it forward or backward ; whatever the believer's case be, the Lord is still to him, Abba, Father.

Thou must indeed, O believer, grapple with death, and shalt get the first fall ; but thou shalt rise again, and come off victorious at last. Thou must go down to the grave ; but though it be thy long home, it will not be thy everlasting home. Thou wilt not hear the voice of thy friends there, but thou shalt hear the voice of Christ there. Thou mayst be carried thither with mourning, but shalt come up from it rejoicing. Thy friends indeed will leave thee there, but thy God will not. What God said to Jacob concerning his going down to Egypt, Gen. xlvii. 3, 4. he says to thee, anent thy going down to the grave, " Fear not to go down, I will go with thee, and I will also surely bring thee up again : " O solid comfort ! O glorious hopes ! wherefore comfort yourselves, and one another, with these words, 1 Thes. iv. 18.

Let

Let us rest in that he cometh ; God hath kept the day hid from us, that we may be every day ready for it, Matt. xxv. 13. And let us remember, that the last day of our life, will determine our state in the last day of the world : and as we die, so shall we be judged. Come and go are but short words, but they are such as will afford matter of thought to all mankind, through the ages of eternity.

From Dr. BATE's Harmony of the Divine Attributes, &c.

'TIS a chosen misery that is come upon man, and not to be imputed to any defect of the Divine goodness. To speak strictly, sin is the only evil in the world : 'tis an impious folly to imagine that God was either defective in wisdom, not to know what was the best state for man in his creation, or defective in goodness, that knowing it, he would not confer it upon him ; or defective in power, that willing, he was unable to make him better.

How free was that love, that caused the infinitely blessed God to do so much for our recovery ? as if his felicity were imperfect without ours.

The

The love of God makes us amiable, but did not find us so.

Man is a despicable creature, so weak that he trembles at the appearance of a worm, and yet so wicked that he lifts up his hand against heaven.

'Tis the highest misery to have nothing to hope, and something to fear.

The scripture distinctly represents the love of God in giving his Son, and the love of Christ in giving himself to die for man ; and both require our deepest consideration.

St. John represents to us that God is love ; not charitable and loving, that is too weak an expression, but love itself.

The wisdom and power of God did not act to the utmost of their efficacy in the creation, he could frame a more glorious world ; but the love of God in our strange salvation by Christ, cannot in a higher degree be expressed.

A sincere believer is assured, that all opposition against revealed truths is fallacious, though he cannot discover the fallacy. How is it possible that it should be contrived by natural reason (the gospel) since no man can believe it sincerely when it is revealed, without a supernatural faith ?

The

The strokes of the Creator's hand are engraven in all the parts of the universe. The heavens and earth, and all things in them, are evident testimonies of the excellency of their author. 'Tis true, the visible frame of the world, and the continual benefits of providence, instruct men in those prime truths, the being and bounty of God to those that serve him, and invite them to their duty. God never left himself without a witness in any age.

Nay, if (by an impossible supposition) they could be separated, our Saviour should be more dear to us than salvation. But the doctrine of salvation is the word of truth that came from heaven, and bears the characters and marks of its divine descent.

'Tis God alone can touch the heart, and convince the conscience, so as to produce a saving belief of the heavenly doctrine, and a delight in the discovery, and a resolution to follow it wherever it directs.

This wisdom of God in making the world is evident to every eye, but the gospel is wisdom in a mystery.

Such an inconceivable distance there is between God and man, that it is wonderful God will spend a thought upon us.

All

All the lustre of diamonds, the fire of carbuncles, and the beauty of pearls, are nothing to the glory of heaven.

That is the truest and noblest freedom, to be freed from the servitude of sin.

Rom. viii. 35. The apostle speaks concerning our spiritual enemies, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and that is the prize they would fain rob us of; the love of Christ, which is the fountain of all felicity, and the love of God, which is better than life. These enemies would rob us of his favour, and expose us to his displeasure.

The gospel alone brings light to the mind, peace to the conscience, purity to the affections, and rectitude to the life.

As torrents that are dried up in the heat of summer, when there is the most need of them; so all comforts fail in extremity, that are not derived from the fountain of life.

A true christian is moved by fear, more by hope, most by love.

In heaven there is such a glory and blessedness, as will not only satisfy all our desires, but will exclude all our fears. There shall never be any danger of losing it, nay, there shall never be any fear of losing it.

How

How honourable is it to the truth and power of God, when a believer doth give credit to his revelation of the unseen world ; when we firmly assent to this, that there is another life after this, and another happiness that sense cannot discover ; when we do believe this as firmly as if we saw it ? What an honourable testimony is this to God, when his word shall be such a security, that we can venture our all upon it ?

The giving of heaven itself, with all its joys and glory, is not so perfect and full a demonstration of the love of God, as the giving of his Son to die for us.

The gospel forbids all murmurings against providence, which is the seed of rebellion, and all anxious thoughts concerning things future : Matt. vi. 31.

We should not anticipate evils by our apprehensions and fears, they come fast enough ; nor retain their affecting memory to imbitter our lives, they stay long enough.

It is by humble prayer wherein we acknowledge our wants, and unworthiness, and declare our dependance upon the Divine mercy and power that we obtain grace.

Death is an enemy that threatens none whom
it

it doth not strike, and there is none but it threatens.

From Mr. ELISHA COLES on God's Sovereignty.

NO man perished but for unbelief; where the gospel is not, they perish for not believing in God; and where it is, for not believing in Christ.

All things were made for himself, and by this scale they ascend to him; the world for the elect, the elect for Christ, and Christ for God.

All his works praise him, but above all, that of redemption is of highest note and eminency.

All the ways of God are pleasantness to them that walk in them, and these would not leave them again, although their future happiness were not concerned in it; if they be grievous to any, it is from their unacquaintedness with his love,
1 John v. 3.

THOMAS COLE on Regeneration.

BE not cast down at any thing that offends you here below; you have a father in heaven who takes care of you, numbers the hairs of
of

of your heads, will interest himself in your smallest concerns, and see that all things shall work together for good to you.

From Mr. ROBERT TRAIL.

IF God's word of promise cannot bear thee up, though all the shoulders of all the angels in heaven should prop thee up, thou wouldst sink under them.

The Lord hath changed his countenance, the Lord hath changed his hand, only his heart remains unchangeable still, that's to be firmly believed. What sort of a man is a believer? He is one that is brought within the chariot paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem; every one that is brought to heaven, is carried in that chariot; love all over, bottom and top, and all the sides of it: every believer is a prisoner of love, he is guarded by love till he come to heaven.

All good and nothing but good is in the covenant; all blessings are in it, and every thing that is in it is a blessing, because it is in it: if the rod be in the covenant as it is 'tis good, because 'tis there; and it will be found to be good when we meet it.

The

The devil has been busy above these five thousand years upon the road to heaven, yet he never slew one believer to this day : if a man be in Christ the ark, he is certainly safe ; he may be frightened, he may be disturbed, he may apprehend danger, but he shall feel none.

From Mr. AMBROSE.

REPEATING, confirming, examining the word, is as the pounding of spices, that will make them smell more.

From Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN.

THAT as in a believer, there often come in a thousand objections against his faith, and his heart is filled with doubting thoughts, and to his thinking with nothing else, when yet secret faith works in all its actions against them, and the acts thereof, which are not discerned, do prevail with the heart still to go on to obey God, and cleave to him, and to fear him, more than all those doubts that keep a noise, can prevail to the contrary.

I have told you of an estate of men who walk in darkness and have no light ; yea, souls that

that will complain that they call into question, whether there be a God, or the scriptures be true, or themselves in God's favour, and they have no thought in view, but such as causes them to doubt of all these, and yet even they walk more closely with God in such an hour, than when they are freed from all these, and thereby they shew that they believe these truths, even when they seem to deny them, which they could not do, but that faith and the principles of it work the most strongly in them; when faith says least, it often doth most.

He that believeth on Christ, God stampeth upon that man's will, upon his heart, an instinct after Jesus Christ; and after mystical union with him, so as he can never be quiet without him.

What is weaker than a word? and yet God created the world by it.

If he accompanies the glory of the gospel to our hearts, he presents the things and the real images thereof to our souls in and through those words.

How should we prize and value such a glass as this, preserve it from soiling spots, or breaking, and suffer it not to be perverted: you reject such as are false and misrepresent, you af-

fect pure and clear ones : Oh ! then, keep to and preserve the gospel in its purity ; you see your husband in it, and his beauty every day. It is a deep knowledge, because it is that knowledge which God appropriates unto himself as his invention. There is nothing in thy soul that thou canst object, but there is that in the gospel which will answer it particularly. Therefore, the more knowledge a believer hath of the gospel, the more his heart is comforted. To another man, all the truths of the gospel are but as flowers plucked off the stalks, they do not grow upon his heart, therefore they die and whither ; but a saint hath a root within, upon which all these are ingrafted, and therefore he continually feels the favour of them ; there is still a fresh scent and verdure, and sweet arising from them whereby his heart is comforted.

From Dr. JOHN OWEN.

WHEN a soul through manifold discouragements and despondencies withdraws, and as it were hides itself from him, he calleth to see a poor weeping, blubbered face, and to hear a broken voice, that scarce goes beyond sighs and groans.

Take

Take heed of decays ; whatever ground the gospel loseth in our minds, sin possesseth it for itself and its own ends.

There is no man whatever, that hath any want in reference unto the things of God, but Christ will be unto him that which he wants : I speak of those who are given him of his father. Is he dead ? Christ is life : Is he weak ? Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God : Hath he the sense of guilt upon him ? Christ is compleat righteousness, " the Lord " our righteousness : " many poor creatures are sensible of their wants, but know not where their remedy lies ; indeed whether it be life or light, power or joy, all is wrapped up in him.

Beloved peace, beloved natural relations, beloved wisdom and learning, beloved righteousness and duties, all loss compared with Christ.

Take heed of them who would rob you of the deity of Christ ; if there were no more grace for me than what can be treasured up in a mere man, I should rejoice my portion might be under rocks and mountains.

This is the hidden mystery, great without controversy, admirable to eternity. What poor, low, perishing things, do we spend our contemplations on ?

Were we to have no advantage by this astonishing dispensation, yet its excellency, glory, beauty and depths, deserve the flower of our inquiries, the vigor of our spirits, the substance of our time ; but when withal our life, our peace, our joy, our inheritance, our eternity, our ALL lies herein, shall not the thoughts of it always dwell in our hearts, always refresh and delight our souls.

To teach a man that he cannot do what he ought to do, and for which he condemns himself if he do it not, is no easy task.

We have not a deliverance from trouble, a recovery of health, ease of pains, freedom from any evil that ever laid hold upon us, but it is given us on the intercession of Jesus Christ.

Believers are unacquainted with their own condition, if they look upon their mercies as dispensed in a way of common providence.

Without the consolations of the Holy Ghost, we shall have wisdom for no work ; peace in no condition ; strength for no duty ; success in no trial ; joy in no state ; no comfort in life, no light in death.

None shall ever be delivered from perplexing temptations, unto the glory of God and their own spiritual advantage, but by acting and exercising

ercising of faith on Christ Jesus, and the sufficiency of his grace for our deliverance.

None that think of God with a due reverence, but he shall be sensible of advantage by it.

On Spiritual Mindedness.

In thoughts of the Divine Being and existence, we are apt to be at a loss; but let us betake ourselves unto an holy admiration of what we cannot comprehend; they are the objects of faith and worship, in them we may find rest and satisfaction, when enquiries and reasonings will disquiet us, and it may be overwhelm us. Can we but possess our souls with the apprehension, that when we are left alone in our tryals and dangers, from any countenance of friends, or help of men, yet that indeed we are not alone, because the Father is with us, it will support us under our dispondencies, and enable us unto our duties.

Recalling the experiences we have had of God, will lead us unto the exercise of all kind of graces, which is the greatest disappointment of our adversary.

He who prays as he ought, will endeavour to live as he prays. This none can do, who

doth not with diligence keep his heart unto the things he hath prayed about.

Importunate prayer is certainly prevailing; importunity is as it were made up of two things—frequency of interposition, and variety of arguments.

The law speaks nothing to a sinner, but what his conscience assures him to be true.

There are in all men by nature, indelible characters of the holiness and purity of God; of his justice, and hatred of sin, of his invariable righteousness in the government of the world, that they can never dispose nor lay aside.

He that hath slight thoughts of sin, had never great thoughts of God.

He who is not acquainted with God's holiness and purity, who knows not sin's desert and sinfulness, knows nothing of forgiveness. Who among the saints find not, what life, what light, what strength sometimes; and again how dead, how dark, how weak, as God is pleased to let out, or to restrain the fruits of his love?

Our love to God is ebbing and flowing, waning and increasing: we lose our first love, and we grow again in love, scarce a day at a stand. What poor creatures are we? how unlike the Lord and his love? Whenever was the
time,

time, wherever was the place, that our love was one day equal towards God?

Abide in all duties, in all the ways of worship wherein thou mayst be found, and however it be for a while, the latter end of that soul who thus abideth with God will be peace; it begets a liking of God in the soul, and consequently some love unto him.

Not to have God as a father, is not to have him at all; and he is known as a father only, as he is love and full of pardoning mercy in Christ. Whenever Christ is absent, it is night with a believer. Dull in prayer, wandering in meditations, rare in thoughts of him! whatever way God hath appointed, I will in his strength vigorously pursue, until this frame be altered, and I find my beloved.

Ignatius when he was lead to martyrdom, "let what will, said he, come upon me, only "so as I may obtain Jesus Christ;" all is welcome that comes from him, or for him.

One of the ancients tell us, there ought to be so great a love of the truth in us, that whatsoever we say to be true, should be as much as if we had sworn it to be true, or had delivered it upon oath.

Meditations on the Glory of Christ.

No man shall ever behold the glory of Christ by sight hereafter, who doth not in some measure behold it by faith here in this world. Grace is a necessary preparation for glory, and faith for sight. Wherefore let no man deceive himself; he that hath no sight of the glory of Christ here, shall never have any of it hereafter unto his advantage. Herein would I live; herein would I dye; hereon would I dwell in my thoughts and affections, to the withering and consumption of all the painted beauties of this world, unto the crucifying all things here below, until they become unto me a dead and deformed thing, no way meet for affectionate embraces.

Temptations, afflictions, changes, sorrows, dangers, fears, sickness and pains, do fill up no small part of this present life.

If you would behold the glory of Christ, as the great means of your sanctification and consolation, as the only preparation for the beholding of his glory in eternal blessedness; consider what of God is made known and represented unto you in him, wherein God purposed and designed to glorify himself in you.

Pray

Pray then with Moses, that God would shew you this his glory; pray with the apostle, that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened to behold it; pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Fill your minds with spiritual thoughts and contrivances about them. He who hath had a real view of this glory, though he know himself to be a poor, sinful, dying worm of the earth, yet would he not be an angel in heaven, if thereby he should lose the sight of it; for this is the center wherein all the lines of the manifestations of the Divine glory do meet and rest.

Let your occasional thoughts of Christ be many, and multiplied every day. He is not far from us; we may make a speedy address to him at any time.

It is to no purpose to boast of Christ, if we have not an evidence of his graces in our hearts and lives. But unto whom he is the hope of future glory, unto them he is the life of present grace.

If we learn to be content with such lifeless unaffected thoughts of him, as bring in no experience of his love, nor give us a real view of
the

the glory of his person, we shall wither away as unto all the power of religion. And a great rebuke it ought to be unto us, when Christ hath at any time in a day been long out of our minds: he humbled himself for the salvation of the church unto the eternal glory of God, to take our nature upon him, and to be made man; and those who cannot see a divine glory in his so doing, do neither know him, nor love him, nor believe in him, nor do any way belong unto him.

What is it that any man in distress, who flies thereunto may look for in a sanctuary? a supply of all his wants, a deliverance from all his fears, a defence against all his dangers, are proposed unto him therein. Such is the Lord Jesus Christ herein unto sin-distressed souls; he is a refuge unto us in all our spiritual distresses and disconsolations. Are any of us burdened with a sense of sin? Are we bowed down with the oppression of any spiritual adversary? Do we on any of these accounts walk in darkness and have no light? One view of the glory of Christ herein is able to support and relieve us. Where are our hearts and minds, if we can see no glory in it? I know in the contemplation of it, it will quickly overwhelm our reason, and
bring

bring our understanding into a loss : but unto this loss do I desire to be brought every day.

Moreover, be not contented to have right notions of the love of Christ in your minds, unless you can attain a gracious taste of it in your hearts, no more than you would be to see a feast or banquet richly prepared, and partake of nothing of it unto your refreshment.

So much as we know of Christ, his sufferings, and his glory ; so much do we understand of the scripture, and no more. God alone hath all being in him : hence he gives himself that name, I AM ; he was eternally All ; when all things else that ever were, or now are, or shall be, were nothing.

Our present mortal state is this wall, which must be demolished before we can see him as he is. In the mean time, he looketh through the windows of the ordinances of the gospel ; he gives us sometimes, when he is pleased to stand in those windows, a view of himself ; but it is imperfect, as is our sight of a man through a window. The appearance of him at these windows, are full of refreshment unto the souls of them that do believe ; but our view of them is imperfect, transient, and doth not abide ; we are for the most part quickly left to bemoan
what

what we have lost. The more we grow in faith and spiritual light, the more sensible are we of our present burthens, and the more vehemently do we groan for deliverance into the perfect liberty of the sons of God. The desire hath sorrow, and that sorrow hath joy and refreshment in it; like a shower that falls on a man in a garden in the spring, it wets him, but withal refresheth him with the favour it causeth in the flowers and herbs of the garden where he is. Alas! we cannot here think of Christ, but we are quickly ashamed of, and troubled at our own thoughts, so confused are they, so unsteady, so imperfect: commonly they issue in a groan or a sigh; "Oh! when shall we come unto him? when shall we be ever with him? when shall we see him as he is?"

Do we find ourselves lifeless in the spiritual duties of religion? Are we strangers unto the heavenly visits of consolation and joys, those visitations of God whereby he preserves our souls? we have no way of recovery but by this alone; to this strong tower must we turn ourselves as prisoners of hope; unto Christ must we look that we may be saved. It may be, you have prayed, and cried, and resolved, and
vowed,

vowed, but all without success, as you suppose, sin hath broken through all: however, if you give not over, you shall prevail at last.

Spiritual appetite consists in earnest desires, and a savory relish: so it is described by the apostle; "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." There is required unto this spiritual appetite an earnest desire of the word, grounded on an experience of the grace of God in it unto this end, that we may grow and thrive spiritually thereby.

Let us live in the constant contemplation of the glory of Christ, and virtue will proceed from him to repair all our decays, to renew a right spirit within us, and to cause us to abound in all duties of religion. This way of producing these effects, flesh and blood will not reveal; it looks like washing in Jordan to cure a leprosy: but the life of faith is a mystery, known only unto them in whom it is. It is a great thing to apprehend in a due manner, that a poor soul that hath been guilty of many sins, leaving the body, it may be under great pain, distress and anguish, it may be by outward violence, should be immediately admitted and received

ceived into the glorious presence of God, with all the holy attendants of his throne, there to enjoy rest and blessedness for evermore ! Some have been relieved by the remembrance of this exercise of faith, when they have been at the door of desperation ; such or such a season they had experience of the work of faith in prayer, hath been their relief ; an experience hereof is a jewel, which it may be of no great use whilst it lies by you locked up in a cabinet, but which you will know the worth of, if ever you come to need bread for your lives.

The desirable things of this life ; uncertain riches, uncertain enjoyments, perishing things passing away ; yea, snares, burdens, hinderances, the scripture represents them to be, and so they are.

For the times ; there are none to be so diligently watched over as our solitudes and retirements by night or day : whatever we are in them, that we are indeed, and no more.

The light of the just doth in the issue always increase by temptations, as that of the hypocrite is constantly impaired by them.

In a Letter to Mrs. POLHILL, the Dr. says,

“ The sovereignty of divine wisdom and
“ grace is all that I have at this day to retreat
“ unto; God direct you thereunto also, and
“ you will find rest and peace: pray, madam,
“ my dear sister, child and care, beware you
“ lose not the advantage of this dispensation.”

TO CHARLES FLEETWOOD, Esq.

“ There is more than ordinary mercy in
“ every day’s preservation. I find you and I
“ are much in complaining; for my part I must
“ say, and is there not a cause? So much dead-
“ ness, so much unspirituality, so much weak-
“ ness in faith, coldness in love, instability in
“ holy meditations, as I find in myself, are
“ cause sufficient of complaint: but is there
“ not cause also of thanksgiving and joy in the
“ Lord? Are there not reasons for them? when
“ I begin to think of them, I am overwhelmed;
“ they are great, they are glorious, they are
“ inexpressible.”

In a letter to the same gentleman, (two days
before he died) he says, “ I am going to him
“ whom

“ whom my soul has loved, or rather, who
 “ has loved me with an everlasting love;
 “ which is the whole ground of all my conso-
 “ lation. I am leaving the ship of the church
 “ in a storm; but, while the great pilot is in
 “ it, the loss of a poor under-rower will be
 “ inconsiderable: live and pray, and hope and
 “ wait patiently, and do not despond; the pro-
 “ mise stands invincible, that he will never
 “ leave us nor forsake us.”

From Dr. OWEN's Answer unto that En-
 quiry, “ Wherefore we believe the Scrip-
 “ ture to be the Word of God.”

But why should we believe this word of pro-
phesy? may not this also be a cunningly de-
 vised fable, and the whole scripture be but the
 suggestions of men's private spirits, as is ob-
 jected? all is finally resolved into this, that the
 writers of it were immediately moved and acted
 by the Holy Ghost, from which divine original
 it carrieth along its own evidence with it.

He maketh himself known to us by the in-
 nate principles of our nature, unto which he
 hath communicated as a power of apprehending
 so indelible a sense of his being, his authority,
 and

and his will, so far as our natural dependance on him, and moral subjection to him do require.

When God revealeth himself, that is, his eternal power and godhead, by the things that are made, the works of creation, the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament shewing his handy work; the reason of men stirr'd up and brought into exercise thereby, doth infallibly conclude upon the evidence that is in that revelation, that there is a God, and he eternally powerful and wise, without any farther arguments to prove the revelation to be true.

We need no other argument to prove that God made the world, but itself.

Now there are greater and more evident impressions of divine excellencies left on the written word from the infinite wisdom of the author of it, than any that are communicated unto the works of God, of what sort soever. Wherefore the only evidence whereon they received the word, and acknowledged it to be of God, was that divine power and efficacy, whereof they found and felt the experience in themselves, 1 Cor. xiv.

Although a man be furnished with external arguments of all sorts concerning the divine original, and authority of the scriptures; yet

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if

if he have no experience in himself of its divine power, authority and efficacy, he neither doth nor can believe it to be the word of God in a due manner, with faith divine and supernatural. But he that hath this experience, hath that testimony in himself which will never fail. It evidences its divine power in administering strong consolation in the deepest, and most unrelievable distresses. It doth in like manner evidence its divine authority by the awe which it puts on the minds of the generality of mankind, unto whom it is made known, that they dare not absolutely reject it.

On the cxxxth Psalm. (Dr. OWEN.)

As when Jacob had seen the beauty of Rachel, and loved her, he was contented to wait seven years for the enjoyment of her to be his wife, and thought no time long, no toil too hard that he might obtain her; so the soul having discovered the beauty and excellency of forgiveness as it is with God, as it is in his gracious heart, in his eternal purpose, in the blood of Christ, in the promise of the gospel, is resolved to wait quietly and patiently for the time wherein God will clear up unto it its own
personal

personal interest therein: even one experimental embracement of it, even at the hour of death, doth well deserve the waiting and obedience of the whole course of a man's life.

From ANTHONY PALMER's Tempestuous Soul calmed by Jesus Christ.

IT is an honour to a friend to trust him, when absent from him, yea, when he seems to frown; so to a poor soul to follow and believe Jesus Christ sweet, and gracious, and faithful; though it never tasted him, gives most glory unto him.

If it is no farther with thee than this, "Lord, help my unbelief;" know, it is impossible to cry after Christ with complaints of unbelief, without some truth of faith.

A poor soul may take farther encouragement beside the promises, from the blessed experiences of many and many a comfortless creature, who after many tempests, perishing fears, sinkings of spirits, have at last by waiting publickly and privately for Christ's voice found the rebuking power of it, and their distempers sweetly allayed, and even a sudden calm upon them. Consider therefore by the way, what are the

wondrous things upon thy spirit? what are the things thou hast deep thoughts of heart about? canst thou feelingly say, Oh! how wonderful have been the thoughts of Christ towards me; what wonders hath he wrought for me, and in me, "Who is a God pardoning iniquity, like unto thee!" That is the temper and voice of a pardoned soul, so he breaks out into admiration of him.

From Mr. HERCULES COLLINS.

THIS is very observable, that satan generally sets most upon the most holy, and those who bring most glory to God, because he envieth their glorifying of him: this is the chief design of satan in all your temptations; and the destruction of the soul is his subordinate end.

The devil's assaults are not so much against the weakest but strongest saint, and therefore it is no good inference to conclude you cannot be a child of God because so much hurried, for it is rather an argument you are one of God's choice jewels.

Isa. xli. 26. The true God declares the end from the beginning, therefore he must fore-know

know whatever comes to pass. And albeit God did not decree sin to be in the world, because contrary to his nature, yet he decreed to permit it, knowing how to bring glory to himself out of it, else would never have permitted it.

He foreknew infallibly who would be saved, and who would miscarry, before he made man, notwithstanding all the means afforded; God foresaw many thousands would perish, yet, let none say, if so, why did God make man? O! have a care of thy thoughts, Rom. ix. 19—23.

He is in the world in a way of providence; in heaven most glorious; in hell in his power and justice: God is in every place, and totally in every place; not a part of God in one place, and a part in another.

Rain nor drought, fruitfulness, barrenness, riches nor poverty, health nor sickness, prosperity nor adversity, life nor death, come not upon us by chance, but according to the counsel of his own will; divine providence extends itself to all persons, things, places and times.

Saying of St. BERNARD.

There is nothing so effectual to obtain grace, or retain grace, as always to be found before

God, not over wise, but to fear. Happy art thou, if thy heart be replenished with three fears : a fear for received grace ; a greater fear for lost grace ; a greatest fear to recover grace.

Sayings of St. AUGUSTIN.

Temporal things more ravish in the expectation than in fruition ; but things eternal, more in the fruition, than expectation.

The best remedy against pride, is the beholding the Lord's cross.

From Mr. JOSEPH HALL'S Select Thoughts.

THERE is no cloathing can fit the soul but the Lord Jesus Christ ; all other robes in the wardrobe of earth, or heaven, are too short, too strait : It is our honour, and his favour, that we are allowed to love God ; it is our duty to fear him. If then Christ be mine, all is mine : O ! Saviour, let me feel myself thoroughly possess'd of thee ! whether the world slide or sink, I am happy. If we did know how sweet the Lord is, in his sure promises, in his unfailing mercies, we could not but long
after

after him, and remain unsatisfied till we find him ours. The best being on earth is but miserable; even Enoch's walk with God cannot exempt him from sorrows, he must cease to be, that he may begin to be happy.

From Mr. MARSHALL's Gospel Sanctification.

THEY that slight the work of faith for its easiness, shew, that they were never yet made sensible of sin, and the terrible use of the law, and the wrath of God that they lie under; and of the darkness and vanity of their minds, the corruption and hardness of their hearts, and their bondage under the power of sin and satan, and have not been truly humbled, without which they cannot believe in a right manner.

Many sound believers have found by experience, that it hath been a very hard matter to bring their hearts to the duty of believing; it hath cost them vigorous struggles and sharp conflicts with their own corruptions, and satan's temptations. It is so difficult a work, that we cannot perform it without the mighty working of the Spirit of God in our hearts, who only can make it to be absolutely easy to

us, and doth make it easy, or suffer it to be difficult, according as he is pleased to communicate his grace in various degrees unto our souls.

We must not be grieved, that we have nothing to trust upon besides Christ for our salvation ; but rather we are to rejoice that we need nothing else, and that we have a sure foundation to rely upon, incomparably better than any other that can be imagined, and we must resolve to cast the burden of our souls wholly on Christ, and to seek salvation no other way whatsoever becomes of us.

Many that have fallen into great sins are ruined for ever, because they do not account the grace of Christ sufficient for their pardon and sanctification ; when they think they are gone, and past all hope of recovery, that their sins are upon them, and they pine away in them, how shall they live ? This despair works secretly in many souls, without much trouble and horror, and maketh them careless of their souls and true religion. The devil fills some with horrid, filthy, and blasphemous thoughts, on purpose that they may think their sins too great to be forgiven ; though commonly such thoughts are the least of the sins of those that are pestered with

with them, and rather the devil's sins than theirs, because they are hurried into them sore against their wills: but if their hearts be somewhat polluted with them, Christ testifieth, "that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." And as for those that are guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the reason why they are never forgiven, is not because of any want of sufficiency in the blood of Christ, or in the pardoning mercy of God, but because they never repent of that sin, and never seek to God for mercy thro' Christ, but continue obstinate until death, for the scripture testifieth, "that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." So that the merits of Christ are sufficient for all that seek to him for mercy by believing.

Take heed of fostering any thoughts, that God hath absolutely decreed to shew no saving mercy to you, or that you have already committed the unpardonable sin, or that it is in vain for you to attempt the work of believing, because God will not help you in it. If such thoughts prevail in your hearts, they will do you more hurt than the blasphemous thoughts that terrify you, or any of the grossest abominations

nations that ever you were guilty of, because they obstruct your believing in Christ for salvation.

A continuance and growth in faith, will require our labour and industry, as well as the beginning; though we are to ascribe the glory of all to the grace of God in Christ, who is the finisher, as well as the author of it.

The more good and beneficial we apprehend God to be to us to all eternity, doubtless the more lovely God will be to us, and our affections will be the more inflamed towards him; God will not be loved as a barren wilderness, a land of darkness to us, neither will he be served for nought. He would think it a dishonour to him to be owned by us as our God, if he had not prepared for us a city; and he draweth us to love him by the cords of a man, such cords as the love of men useth to be drawn by, even by his own love to us, in laying his benefits before us: therefore the way for us to keep ourselves in the love of God, is to look for his mercy unto eternal life.

From

From Mr. NEALE'S History of the
Puritans.

IN the year 1570, died Mr. Andrew Kingf-mill, born in Hampshire, and educated in All-Souls College, Oxon. He had such a strong memory, that he could readily rehearse in the Greek language, all St. Paul's epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and other portions of scripture, memoriter. He was a most pious and religious person, undervaluing all wordly profit in comparision of the assurance of his salvation.

In 1572, died the rev. and learned Mr. John Knox, he was a son of thunder, and feared not the face of any man in the cause of religion. After a life of great service and labour, he died comfortably in the midst of his friends, in the 67th year of his age, being greatly supported in his last hours from the 17th chapter of St. John, 1 Cor. xv. both which he ordered to be frequently read to him.

In king James Ist's time, died Thomas Cartwright, one of the chief of the puritans, and a great sufferer for non-conformity. He was such a popular preacher, that when his turn came to preach at St. Mary's, the sexton was obliged

ed to take down the windows. He was a person of uncommon industry and piety, fervent in prayer, a frequent preacher, and of a meek and humble spirit; his last sermon was on Eccles. xii. 7. The Tuesday following he was two hours on his knees in private prayer, and a few hours after quietly resigned his spirit to God, in the 68th year of his age. The famous Mr. Dod preached his funeral sermon.

Mr. Robert Bolton, died in 1631, was a most awakening and authoritative preacher; his constant course was to pray six times a day, twice in secret, twice with his family, and twice with his wife.

Mr. Thomas Westfield, Bishop of Bristol, died June 25, 1644, aged 71; and composed his own epitaph: one line of which was, "Worn out with age and grief:" and another, "The least of bishops, the greatest of sinners."

In 1645, died the famous old Mr. John Dod, he was a most humble, pious, and devout man, and universally beloved; he died in the 96th year of his age: one of Mr. Dod's maxims was, "sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions."

The following Lines were composed by a private GENTLEMAN, (now deceased) about the time of his conversion.

I.

COME, blessed Jesus, quickly come,
And mark the bright celestial way,
Within my breast erect thy throne,
Nor let me faint through long delay.

II.

I'm weary of these earthly toys,
The world and all its flattering charms,
My heart pants after purer joys,
And Christ alone my bosom warms.

III.

With coldness and contempt I view
These vain, these transitory scenes,
Since Christ hath form'd my soul anew,
And wak'd me from Egyptian dreams.

IV.

Methinks a ray of heavenly light,
Already darts upon my soul;
Methinks the promis'd land's in sight,
My hearts the needle, Christ the pole.

V.

V.

What tho' for pageantry and state,
 Others to earthly treasures trust,
 And aiming falsely to be great,
 Like the vile serpents lick the dust?

VI.

My heart, my treasure, and my rest,
 My all-sufficiency's above,
 The kingdoms of the world possess'd
 Are vain without my Saviour's love.

From Mr. DORRINGTON's Hymns.

I.

MY God, to Thee ourselves we owe,
 And to Thy bounty all we have :
 Behold to Thee our praises bow,
 And humbly Thy acceptance crave.

II.

If we are happy in a friend,
 That very friend, Lord, thou bestow'st :
 His power, his will to help our end,
 Is just so much as thou allow'st.

If

III.

If we enjoy a free estate,
Our only title is from Thee,
Thou mad'st our lot to bear that rate,
Which else an empty blank would be.

IV.

If we have health, that well-tun'd ground,
Which gives the music to the rest,
It is by Thee our air is found,
Our food secur'd, our phyfic blest.

V.

If we have hopes one day to view
The glories of thy blissful face,
Each drop of that refreshing dew
Must fall from heaven, and thy free grace.

The

The SUMMUM BONUM ; or, SUPREME
GOOD : A POEM. Composed by the
late Mr. HURNE, a Baptist Minister
of Froome.

SURrounded with the num'rous woes,
Which here the creature undergoes
As I most pensive stood ;
My soul did eagerly aspire,
Inflamed with a warm desire
To know the chiefest good.

Alas ! thinks I, all things around,
With vanities and woes abound ;
Yet since I've undertook
To seek the chiefest good, let me
Examine all, lest it should be
Hid where I may not look.

I first consulted with my SENSE ;
Hoping intelligence from thence
Might help me in the way,
And give my searches good success
To find the chiefest happiness,
And tell me where it lay.

This

This soon assur'd me that it lay
In the most smooth and pleasant way,
 With no afflicting cross;
Still to abound in strength and health,
Great honour, pleasures, ease and wealth,
 Free from all grieving loss.

But I soon found this would not do,
Unless it could be proved true
 That I immortal be;
And in my pleasures still to range,
Fearless of a succeeding change;
 This seemed plain to me,

That nothing less cou'd give content;
For if my pleasant time, when spent,
 Shall torment to me bring,
My joys are torments incohere;
My pleasures (thro' this change of state)
 Have still a smarting sting.

Alas! what is my STRENGTH, thinks I,
When God ordains all flesh shall die?
 My strength will surely fail:
Weakness will then so much attend,
I shall no more myself defend,
 When death does me assail.

What is my HEALTH, when God ordains
Me to invade with dying pains ?

I may not health enjoy
One moment's time, e're that it goes
Beyond recall ; then grief and woes
Shall all my mirth destroy.

What is my HONOUR, when I must
Submit to lay it all in dust,
And after that appear
An object of contempt and shame,
Disdain'd by God, and still the flame
Of his displeasure bear ?

What are my PLEASURES here below,
When in my soul I sadly know
They soon shall cease to be ;
And I must give a sad account
For all I do ? What poor amount
Of joy accrues to me !

What is my EASE, when that my mind
Can't serious be, but still I find,
A sting within my breast ?
While others think I ease enjoy,
This sting within does me annoy,
And robs me of my rest.

What

What is my WEALTH in cash or friends ?

When this delusive station ends,

All will be left behind :

No cash nor friends can then obtain

An easement from that endless pain

And torment of my mind.

What is my FREEDOM FROM THE CROSS,

And from all present grieving loss,

My smooth and pleasant way ?

'Twill soon appear, my soul's undone,

I sav'd my dross, my gold is gone ;

I therefore needs must say,

My sense does judge exceeding wrong ;

Nor does it unto sense belong

To be herein my guide :

No carnal sense has understood

Wherein does lie the chiefest good :

I'll not in it confide.

Above my sense I'll next ascend ;

To * REASON's dictates I'll attend ;

It disapproves my sense :

It says, man was not merely made

For brutal pleasures, which soon fade :

No solid joys come thence.

O 2

Says

* By REASON here, is meant man's natural intellectual faculties, distinct from the special aid of Divine Grace.

Says REASON, leave such things behind,
True happiness is in the mind,

As noble souls confess :

A LOFTY GENIUS well employ'd
In nature's studies, has enjoy'd
The chiefest happiness.

O! the delights which man does find
In the improvements of the mind,
In searching with success
In NATURE's secrets ; where he pries,
And traces things with eagle-eyes,
No mortal can express.

The happiness which does arise
From such sublime discoveries,
By which the soul does know
Itself, and all things else besides,
Whatever in the world resides,
Above or here below.

NATURE IMPROV'D does also rise
To purchase that which doth comprize
The total sum of bliss :
A noble mind obtains content,
And never will itself torment,
Whatever seems amiss.

If outward things run all across;
No weakness, pain, disgrace, or loss,
 Can rob him of his rest:
He's still content, and happy still;
Still undisturb'd, come on what will.
 Sure such an one is blest.

Thus to my Reason I give ear,
And at the first did seem to hear
 With pleasure and delight:
Deluded with its words, I thought
I now had found what I had sought;
 But was mistaken quite.

I soon pursu'd what Reason taught;
Looking to those with Reason fraught:
 But soon I seem'd to see
Those noble souls were far from blest:
The chiefest good they ne'er possess,
 As plain appear'd to me.

It's true indeed, the exercise
Of such who are in NATURE wise,
 Is vastly far above
The pleasures of those brutal fools
In *Bacchus'* or in *Venus'* schools,
 Who sensual pleasures love.

But tho' it greater joy does give
To such who thus sublime'y live ;
 Yet is it not the SUM
Of good, of happiness and bliss ;
The SUMMUM BONUM still they miss,
 When to their end they come.

Nor can such satisfying joy
Attend and follow such employ,
 Since none can ever find
All things they seek ; some mysteries
Are hid from PHILOSOPHIC eyes :
 Now what is thus behind

Does mar the joy, and spoil the bliss :
Man's NOBLE GENIUS grieves at this,
 And does itself torment.
Thus Aristotle, eagle-ey'd,
Could never comprehend the tide,
 But dy'd in discontent.

Nor can such noble souls as those,
By all their NATURE-HELPS compose,
 When God demands their breath.
Great Socrates seem'd best prepar'd
To meet all ills ; yet he was scar'd
 At his approaching death.

Sure

Sure none himself more overcame,
Unless the stories of the same
Are but an idle tale.

All ills beside he could withstand ;
Yet that dread cup put in his hand,
Soon made his face look pale.

His learning all, and human skill,
Cou'd not then make his mind tranquil,
Nor unto him entail
Lasting repose, his changing face
Bewray'd his fears ; unhappy case !
His learning then did fail.

But now suppose it wou'd bear out
The flocks of death ; yet, without doubt,
It's not the chiefest bliss,
Unless it also does provide
Eternal mansions, to abide
In endless happiness.

What's that, alas ! which only serves
Our need in time ? sure it deserves
But an ignoble name ;
Since, when time ends, its aid is gone,
And he for ever is undone,
Who trusted in the same.

Thus did my carnal reason too
Direct me wrong : what could I do ?

To whom cou'd I address,
Whereby directions I might gain
The SUMMUM BONUM to obtain,
The chiefest happiness ?

Then being in my mind perplext,
Above my carnal reason next
I did myself apply
To that unerring teacher giv'n
By merciful indulgent heav'n ;
It was THEOLOGY.

It so propitious was and kind,
It fully eas'd my troubled mind :
By it I understood
That God, and God alone, is he
Who is the chief felicity,
The SUM of every good.

A GOD IN CHRIST, a Christ in God,
(Tho' carnal sense does think it odd)
Is sure the chiefest blifs ;
Those who enjoy an int'rest in
His special favour, have not seen
A greater good than this.

Let

Let SENSE cry out, enjoy the FLESH ;

Let REASON too come on afresh,

And say, enjoy the MIND :

If flesh or mind enjoyed be,

It gives no true felicity ;

It has a sting behind.

But he that does his God enjoy,

Nor life nor death can e'er destroy

His solid joy and peace :

He's pleas'd to think that death attends ;

For when all earthly pleasure ends,

His joys will much increase.

Enjoyment of the flesh does tend

Men to debauch ; and in the end

They horror feel within ;

But God enjoy'd does purify,

And give a blest serenity ;

Healing the sting of sin.

Likewise enjoyment of the mind

Does ever tend, we sadly find,

To blow men up with pride :

They aim at SELF, in SELF they trust ;

But God enjoy'd lays in the dust ;

Thus God is glorify'd.

No doubt, says he, my pride was such,
It must be clogg'd with this reproach ;

Then let it welcome be.

Ye wicked men, that speak and do
The worst ye can ; it is not you :

It's God, and only he.

His PLEASURES also he enjoys
In such wise, that when God destroys

And takes away the fame ;

It is his pleasure to submit,
And still to be what God thinks fit.

A blessed happy frame !

Pleasures have often been, says he,
Only bewitching snares to me,

To draw me from my God :

I blefs him, that he now in love
Supports me under their remove,

And sanctifies his rod.

He EASE enjoys, and sweetly knows
He ought to love what heav'n bestows,

And thankfully to prize

Those undeserved favours given
By bountiful, indulgent heav'n ;

But not them IDOLIZE.

And

And when his sov'reign Lord ordains
Him to chastise with smarting pains,
He still has this relief,
The time is short and soon will end,
With every thing which does offend :
Thus he sustains his grief.

Thinks he, those smarting pains may be
The means ordain'd of keeping me
From many evil deeds :
God knows my case better than I ;
He sees my lust and vanity,
And suits this to my needs.

Better by far such pains endure,
Than thro' continu'd ease procure
By sin, a lasting shame.
Such thoughts as these do make me prize
God's infinite, unerring, wise
Disposal of the same.

He WEALTH enjoys, when God bestows
The same upon him ; yet he knows
It's not his chiefest store ;
If God does all his wealth remove,
That's here below, he knows above
He still has vastly more.

Most

Most certain 'tis there never can,
From such advancements of the MAN,
Such inward peace proceed,
As where the soul is laid in dust,
And sweetly in his God does trust
To answer all his need.

If all things round him here below
Appear confus'd, he still does know,
Tho' they so dark appear,
His GOD rules all ; his wise decree
Secures the whole, how it shall be :
This keeps him safe from fear.

He knows his God does still abound
In love to him ; tho' all things round
Do darkly him beset :
His wise decree secures all things,
And GOOD still OUT OF EVIL brings :
None can his purpose lett.

He STRENGTH enjoys, but if at length
God's pleas'd to take away his strength,
He'll quietly resign :
He knows his want of strength does tend
To make him on his God depend ;
His strength, says he, is mine.

When

When I am weak, then I am strong ;
God is my portion all along :
 I'm led to him thereby.
Thus I rejoice to be made low,
And taught thereby myself to know,
 And to my strength to fly.

He HEALTH enjoys, yet is he still
A tenant at his Maker's will ;
 If God will it remove,
He gives it up, and loves the rod :
My health, says he, is all in God ;
 He always acts in love.

It is MY GOD ; from him it came :
I never did deserve the same,
 Yet sure I am that he
Acts for my good ; had it been best
To have been longer with it blest,
 It should continu'd be.

His HONOUR also, and good name,
He quietly resigns the same
 Unto his God's dispose :
If God removes it far away,
He wishes not to say him nay,
 Nor PROVIDENCE oppose.

His

His portion there, which love procur'd,
Is vastly firm to him secur'd

By God's unchanging will.

His wealth below is not his all :

That stands secure, when this does fall ;

Therefore he's happy still.

He FRIENDS enjoys, yet so that still

He holds them at his Maker's will :

None of them all, says he,

Can me assist, or me oppose,

But just at his supreme dispose,

Who orders all for me.

When all my friends their faces change,

I'm not surpriz'd, nor think it strange,

Nor creatures rashly blame :

It's God ordains it, to the end

I may the more on him depend,

Who always is the same.

Welcome my friends, my friends you'll be

So long as God does wisely see

Your friendship will be best :

When he sees meet to pull me down,

My friends shall change, and on me frown :

In this I'm also blest.

What

What is my FREEDOM FROM THE CROSS ?

My freedom from all grieving loss ?

I'll not in it confide :

If God commands, adieu to those ;

I am at his all-wise dispose,

And so am satisfy'd.

Farewell my SMOOTH and EASY WAY ;

Since God ordains, As is my day,

Ev'n so my strength shall be :

Lord grant me THIS, let all the rest

Be manag'd as thou see'st best ;

I'm happy still in thee.

Farewell ENJOYMENT OF THE MIND ;

How oft, alas ! do christians find

All discompos'd within ?

Yet can't the changes of their frame

Change their dear Lord ; he's still the same

As he has ever been.

This is the SUM of every bliss,

A GOD IN CHRIST ! what joy is this ?

It cannot be exprest :

This GOD enjoy'd, I still esteem

My SUMMUM BONUM ; for in him

I've everlasting rest.

F I N I S.

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EXHIBIT 10

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